VERONICA;

OR, THE

Mysterious Stranger.

VERONICA;

OR, THE

MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY LISTER.

The ways of Heav'n are dark and intricate,
Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors;
Our underſtanding traces them in vain,
Loſt and bewilder'd in the fruitleſs ſearch;
Nor ſees with how much art the windings run,
Nor where the regular confuſion ends.

ADDISON.

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VERONICA.

CHAP. I.

BER.—" Is not this something more than phantasy?
" What think you of it?"
HOR.—" Before my God I might not this believe,
" Without the sensible and true avouch
" Of mine own eyes."

SHAKESPEARE.

THE families, who were expected on a visit at Lomond House, now arrived; and the society became so very pleasant, that the adventure at the Loch appeared in a short time to be

entirely forgotten by every one excep. Veronica; upon her the impreſſion which it had made, was too deep to be thus eaſily eradicated:—the tall figure of the man ſhe had ſeen, his wide drab-coloured coat, and the peculiar form of his hat, which was ſlouched all round, were ſo accurately recollected by her, as to preclude the idea that ſhe could poſſibly have been deceived.

That a man ſhould be ſeen in the ruins of ſo celebrated a place, and near ſcenery ſo enchanting as to draw daily crowds of admirers, was not in the leaſt ſurpriſing; but his precipitate retreat, his ſingular dreſs, and his having been there not being at all

known by Janet, or her ſon, to whom ſtrangers always applied, were things unaccountable and myſterious.

This affair was, however, now likely to remain for ever without explanation to her, as a few days more would conclude her viſit in Scotland.

As the time of her departure drew near, ſhe felt more anxious than ever for the developement of this ſingular occurrence; and, having gained the permiſſion of the Counteſs, accompanied by the two Sydenhams, paid a farewell viſit to old Janet, in order to ſatisfy her curioſity by perſonal enquiries. They went in the carriage, and Lady Lomond would not, by any means,

hear of their going unattended, although it was in the morning.

Janet was extremely pleaſed at ſuch an unexpected viſit, for ſhe had almoſt given up the hopes of again ſeeing her favourite. She could not, however, in the ſmalleſt degree, elucidate the affair, about which ſo much amazement had been excited; but, with many ſhrugs, acknowledged ſhe had no doubt but what the young lady had ſeen, was ſomething more than human; and immediately recounted innumerable ſtories of ghoſts and apparitions, which ſhe gave full and perfect credence to; with ſeveral dreadful accounts of noiſes, which ſhe herſelf had heard in the ruins, both within

within the laſt few years, and at much remoter periods.

As Veronica was now about taking leave of a ſpot where ſhe had ſpent ſo many happy hours, ſhe could not refrain, notwithſtanding certain unaccountable fears, from viſiting every part of the caſtle, and its enchanting environs. She entered the lawn, and, at the requeſt of Janet, who felt a full conviction that they muſt never meet again, accompanied once more the harp of her friend Catherine. The tunes, which had afforded ſo much ſatisfaction, were again repeated, and the tender heart of the good old woman manifeſted itſelf in copious floods of ſorrow, from the idea that

ſuch muſic muſt never more be heard by her.

The favourite air at length breathed from Veronica's guitar, and Miſs Sydenham ſat in ſilent admiration, leaning upon her harp.

Janet's clock now reminded them that it was time to think of returning home.

The parting ſcene was truly affecting:—Janet preſſed the hand of Mademoiſelle to her lips, and, without being able to ſpeak, attended her to the carriage, which ſhe followed with her eyes until the thickets of Lomond rendered it no longer viſible.

Nor

Nor was Veronica much leſs affected; the attachment which this old woman ſo ſtrongly evinced towards her, had awakened an eſteem which rendered the idea of parting from her for ever truly diſtreſſing.

The laſt day of October had now arrived, and at ſeven the next morning, Lady Strawbenzie's journey was to commence. Veronica paſſed a reſtleſs night, and aroſe at a very early hour. She could not ſleep, and therefore deſigned to amuſe herſelf with reading. She accordingly lighted her candle at the lamp which conſtantly burned in her dreſſing-room, and wrapping herſelf up in her night-gown, ſat down at the table, with a

volume of French poems. She, however, ſoon found that ſhe could not keep her attention fixed upon her book, but that her imagination would wander to paſt ſcenes. She walked backwards and forwards, unable to account for the unuſual depreſſion of ſpirits ſhe laboured under. At length ſhe threw open the window-ſhutters, but the dawn had not appeared; however, it was not perfectly dark, for the moon, yet viſible above the horizon, ſilvered the clear waters of the Loch, which bounded the proſpect from her window, with peculiar beauty. The wind was high, and the tall elms, at every ſweeping blaſt, appeared to lament, in leafy tears, the approach of unkind winter. This

ſcene

ſcene was too congenial with her preſent ſtate of mind for her to retire from the contemplation of it; therefore, extinguiſhing her candle, ſhe drew a chair near the window, and leaned upon the ſaſh in ſilent admiration.

She was not, however, long uninterrupted; a footſtep on the gravel walk below awakened her attention; ſhe ſtarted up—ſhe liſtened, but ſhe neither ſaw nor heard any thing. Again ſhe ſeated herſelf; the myſterious ſtranger at the ruin occurred to her, and her palpitating heart felt a certain unaccountable degree of terror.

Ten minutes elapſed without any repetition of the noiſe; the moon was

now faſt ſinking, and ſhe fancied the ſky began to aſſume the bluſh of morning. The ſound of a foot below again recurred: ſhe could not be miſtaken. She gazed with attention, and once more recognized the figure which ſhe had ſeen near the Loch; it moved ſlowly beneath the window, and for a moment was ſtationary. She was tempted to throw up the ſaſh; but the top of it was faſtened in ſuch a manner, that her trembling fingers could by no means open it. She heard a diſtinct and deep ſigh, and fancied the perſon, whoever he was, turned up his face towards to the window. She haſtily aroſe, and again attempted to open it; but before ſhe could accompliſh her purpoſe, the figure had

had ſtarted away, and ſo dark were the ſhades of the ſurrounding ſhrubberies and woods, that it was impoſſible for her to diſtinguiſh which way it had eſcaped. For a long time ſhe ſtood trembling at the window, and often fancy repreſented to her the perſon who had thus alarmed her, as croſſing the viſta, which opened down to the water, and then diſappearing in the oppoſite groves.

Daylight at length came, and Veronica, hearing that the ſervants of the family were up, ventured to open her door, and proceed to the apartment of the Miſs Sydenhams, who were already dreſſing; for the idea of their friend's departure had occaſioned them

almoſt a ſleepleſs night. Theſe young ladies were greatly aſtoniſhed at the ſtrange incidents which had occurred to Mademoiſelle, and heſitated not to agree with her that the perſon, who had now alarmed her, was the ſame ſhe had ſeen in the cloiſter, and that ſomething very extraordinary muſt be the occaſion of conduct ſo eccentric.

As ſoon as the Sydenhams were dreſſed, they returned with Veronica to her chamber, where ſhe pointed out to them the exact place in which ſhe had ſeen the figure, and thoſe parts of the viſta through which ſhe ſuppoſed it to glide away.

Lady

Lady Strawbenzie's maid now came to acquaint Mademoiſelle that her miſtreſs was up, and would be ready for travelling in half an hour. She was ſurpriſed to find the young ladies already dreſſed; and when ſhe heard the occaſion of their earneſt conference at the window, rejoiced greatly in the idea that ſhe was very ſoon to be removed from a place which ſhe, without heſitation, pronounced to be haunted.

As ſoon as Lady Strawbenzie and Veronica were ſeated in the carriage, the ſubject, which ſo thoroughly poſſeſſed the mind of the latter, was introduced, and occaſioned the utmoſt degree of ſurpriſe and amazement in the mind of the former.

Lady

Lady Strawbenzie was equally unable with Veronica, to account for this ſingular affair; and, although not poſſeſſed of the ſmalleſt ſuperſtition, almoſt tempted to yield for a moment to an idea of its being ſomething out of the common courſe of nature. How elſe could it be reconciled? A robber, or a perſon in diſtreſs, would have ſurely acted in a very different manner.

Converſations and conjectures reſpecting this buſineſs filled up the whole of their journey; and even on the third day, when they arrived at Scarborough, it was ſtill the ſubject which appeared moſt to intereſt them.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

" How know I who, or what, I am?
" Heaven's kept me hid in darkneſs, from myſelf,
" And from my blood."

HILL.

THE direct route of Lady Strawbenzie from Scotland to her country reſidence, lay through York; and her preſent viſit to Scarborough was occaſioned by a report which ſhe had heard during her journey, that ſeveral French Nuns had landed there, and a deſire

deſire of offering every aſſiſtance in her power to thoſe unhappy women.

On her arrival at Scarborough, ſhe found that they had taken poſſeſſion of an unoccupied nobleman's ſeat in the neighbourhood, and fortunately were not in want of pecuniary aſſiſtance, having managed matters ſo well as to convey a great ſhare of their property to this ſide of the channel.

Nothing can equal the ſurpriſe and joy which affected Veronica, when ſhe underſtood that theſe ladies were from the very convent at Leige where ſhe had been educated, excepting that which agitated the good Nuns themſelves, on finding that the daughter of

of Count de Chattelherhault was yet alive. The only thing which interrupted the happineſs of this unexpected meeting, was an account that Veronica received of the Lady Abbeſs being confined to her bed, and ſo extremely weak, that ſhe had been for ſeveral days prohibited from ſeeing company.

Lady Strawbenzie, who always ſympathized with the ſorrow of her beloved companion, felt almoſt equally diſtreſſed at this intelligence, and immediately formed a reſolution of remaining at Scarborough a whole week, in order to give Mademoiſelle an opportunity of having daily accounts of her dear Madame D'Alonville's health.

health. This kindneſs, however, was of little uſe; for the week paſſed away, and the old lady remained ſtill ſo low, that no ſtranger could, by any means, be allowed to viſit her.

A few days after Veronica's return to Strawbenzie Caſtle, ſhe had the felicity of hearing that hopes of the Abbeſs's recovery were entertained, and many favourable ſymptoms diſcovered.

This unexpected meeting with the dear friends of her youth, who had formed her opening mind, and to whom ſhe owed every accompliſhment ſhe was in poſſeſſion of, with the

the dangerous illneſs of her dear mother, as ſhe had ever been uſed to call Madame D'Alonville, ſo occupied the mind of Veronica, that the unaccountable incidents, which had ſo greatly excited her alarm and curioſity at Lomond, appeared totally forgotten. Things, however, of greater conſequence to her, and ſtill more remarkable, were about to happen. A letter from one of the Nuns reached Strawbenzie Caſtle, informing her that the Abbeſs, continuing better, had been informed of her viſit to them; and that on hearing this, ſhe had expreſſed a wiſh that ſhe might immediately be ſent for, as ſhe had things to communicate to her, which, as ſhe was in England, were parti-

particularly neceſſary for her to be acquainted with. The Nun concluded with begging that ſhe would travel as expeditiouſly as poſſible, as the phyſicians, notwithſtanding the preſent favourable turn of the old lady's diſorder, were greatly apprehenſive of a relapſe.

The aſtoniſhment of Veronica and her friend, Lady Strawbenzie, at the receipt of this extraordinary letter, cannot be conceived; and they heſitated not to agree in opinion that an immediate return to Scarborough was neceſſary in conſequence of it.

In leſs than an hour Mademoiſelle, therefore, ſet forwards to that place, and

and arrived there as ſoon as poſſibly could be expected. She found the Abbeſs very weak, and extremely impatient for her arrival.

As ſoon as ſhe had taken a ſlight refreſhment, ſhe was led to the ſick room of her venerable friend. Words cannot do juſtice to her diſtreſs on beholding the fragile form of the Abbeſs, ſupported on one ſide by a Nun, and on the other by pillows. She extended one of her emaciated hands as Veronica approached to the bed, and a gleam of ſatisfaction illumined her pale cheek, which had long been a ſtranger to it, whilſt ſhe exclaimed, with a voice ſcarcely audible, "Sit down near me, my child!"

Veronica

Veronica had ſcarcely power to ſeat herſelf upon the ſide of the bed, and preſs to her lips the feveriſh hand which ſhe held in her own.

" Dear mother," ſighed ſhe, in a low tone, " how diſtreſſed am I to meet with you thus!"

" I know your goodneſs," replied the Abbeſs, " but do not, I beſeech you, weep for me; rather rejoice that I am about to be delivered from all the cares and miſeries of this wretched life; the only pleaſure I am now capable of, reſults from the idea that I have ſome diſcoveries to make, which may be of ſervice to you. You will be ſurpriſed, my child, when I tell you,

you, that you are not the daughter of Count de Chattelherhault, but that your parents were Engliſh; this really is the fact. Fearing leſt I ſhould not be alive when you arrived here, or at leaſt that I might not have ſtrength ſufficient left properly to explain to you what I know of the hiſtory of your birth, I ſpent the greateſt part of laſt night in detailing the whole to ſiſter Anne, who committed it to paper, in my own words, as a letter addreſſed to you. This epiſtle, together with a miniature portrait, which was once your mother's, ſhe will immediately ſhew to you."

It was with the utmoſt difficulty, and not without many interruptions, that Madame D'Alonville completed ſo long a ſentence; to proceed further, ſhe was altogether unable;—in ſhort, the exertion ſhe had already uſed, was ſuch as to have occaſioned a ſevere fainting fit, which added much to Mademoiſelle's perturbation, as ſhe even ſuppoſed her dear friend to be in the agonies of death.

Siſter Anne, who ſupported Madame D'Alonville, perceiving the apprehenſions of the young lady, aſſured her, in a low tone of voice, that the Abbeſs would very ſoon recover; and begged ſhe would retire, with ſome of the ſiſters,

ſiſters, into another apartment, where ſhe would join her with the papers and portrait, which had been committed to her care.

CHAP. III.

" The hand of Heaven
Spreads clouds on clouds o'er our benighted heads,
And, wrapp'd in darkneſs, doubles our diſtreſs."

FATAL CURIOSITY.

IN leſs than an hour ſiſter Anne made her appearance; and well knowing the anxiety of mind with which Mademoiſelle de Chattelherhault muſt have expected her, without any formal introduction, produced, from a cabinet, the letter which the Abbeſs had the evening before dictated, and the

the miniature portrait of a female, about fifty years of age, neatly ſet in enamel.

With trembling hands, and a palpitating heart, Veronica unfolded the paper, and traced the following words:

" DEAR DAUGHTER,

" Worn down with ſorrow—an exile from my native country, I had given up the expectation of receiving any thing like ſatisfaction on this ſide the grave; but Heaven, ever merciful, has ſtill retained for me a taſte of earthly felicity. I know that you live—that you have eſcaped from wretched France, and are the inhabitant of a country where you have a

right to claim every privilege of a native, where rank and fortune juſtly ſhould await you. It was lucky, indeed, that fate directed you to the place to which our Society were driven; it was doubly ſo, that life animated my frame at the time you arrived there, for with me every trace of your birth would have expired, and the account I am able to give you, though not abſolutely deciſive, have been loſt for ever. From this you will be able to collect, that you are not the child of the Count and Counteſs de Chattelherhault :—you are not; be attentive, and you ſhall know the whole that I am acquainted with.

"It is now above twenty-five years ſince an Engliſh gentleman of quality arrived at Leige, with a young lady under his care, whom he wiſhed to place in a convent. Our's had been recommended to him; and there, after a private conference with the Abbeſs, my predeceſſor, he left her.

"She continued for many weeks a cloſe priſoner to her cell, attended only by the Superior, and ſiſter Agatha, an old Nun, who has been long dead. She was ſeldom mentioned in the convent, at leaſt in the preſence of the Abbeſs; but reports were, notwithſtanding, very ſoon in circulation, (from what quarter, or upon what

authority, I know not) that ſome improper matrimonial connexion was the cauſe of her being ſent from her country, and devoted to the veil.

" After ſeveral weeks, ſhe appeared at the chapel, attended by Agatha, but ſo cloſely veiled, that ſcarcely any one of the Society had an opportunity of contemplating her countenance: I, however, in this inſtance more fortunate than the reſt, had frequent opportunities of beholding her. If you are deſirous of knowing what kind of a perſon ſhe had, you have only to look in the glaſs, and you will ſee a perfect reſemblance of her.

" She had been in our convent ſix months, when the Abbeſs one day

day ſent for me to her private parlour, and, after ſome compliments on my exemplary behaviour, and aſſurances that I was much in her eſteem, informed me that ſhe had an affair of much conſequence to impart to me, concerning which there was a neceſſity for my preſerving an inviolable ſecrecy. After thanking her for ſuch conſpicuous proofs of regard, and promiſing to obey her in every thing, ſhe proceeded to communicate to me, that the Engliſh woman, who was now in our convent, was the daughter of a nobleman, and that ſhe had married in ſuch a way as to diſoblige her father, in conſequence of which he had found means to ſeparate her from her huſband, and had brought her to the Continent, with the reſo-

lution of compelling her to take the veil.

" She then told me that the young lady we had been talking about was now far gone with child, and that the buſineſs in which my aſſiſtance was wanted, was the diſpoſal of her infant. As it was not proper that a child ſhould be bred up within the walls of a convent, it had been agreed upon, by the young lady's father, that in caſe ſhe proved pregnant, her infant ſhould be placed, by the Abbeſs, in the hands of a nurſe; and if a boy, ſent over to England, but if of the other ſex, introduced into the abbey as early as poſſible. Another method of diſpoſing of it had, however, been diſcovered

diſcovered by Madame Vallery, the Superior, and which ſhe had gained the permiſſion of its grandfather to adopt.

" A French woman of quality (a relation of the Abbeſs's), not fortunate enough to be a mother, and whoſe huſband had long been extremely anxious for a child, was now on a viſit near Leige; and it was concerted between her and Madame Vallery, that the Count, her huſband, ſhould be informed that ſhe was now in that ſtate which they had ſo long hoped for. This was likely to paſs very well with the Count, who, being in Spain on Court buſineſs, was not expected to return home until after

the ſuppoſed accouchement of his wife was over. The part I was to act in this buſineſs, was to aſſiſt the midwife in conveying the infant from the convent.

" For ſix weeks previous to her delivery, the poor young lady was extremely ill, and low ſpirited; at length the moment arrived when you, for you cannot but have diſcovered that this unhappy Engliſh woman was your mother, firſt drew breath. The ſame day that produced you to the light, numbered your unfortunate parent with the dead. You were immediately wrapped in flannels, and conveyed through a private door in the convent gardens, to the houſe where

the Counteſs de Chattelherhault, the perſon who was to act the maternal part to you, reſided. The few perſons to whom this affair was confided, proving faithful, it never was once ſuſpected, or ſo much as an idea entertained, either that the Counteſs had preſented her huſband with a ſuppoſititious child, or our young Engliſh woman been made a mother. That the latter had been extremely unwell for ſome time was known through the convent, ſo that her death did not appear, by any means, ſudden or remarkable; and from her having been ſo very ſeldom ſeen, and little known, that ſuch a perſon had ever exiſted within our walls appeared very ſoon to be totally

forgotten. Notwithſtanding the large portion of my time which I ſpent in the apartment of your mother, yet I never, by any means, was able to learn her name or family. Whenever I inquired of the Abbeſs, I was given to underſtand that ſhe was prevented from telling me by a ſolemn promiſe never to reveal it; and as for aſking the young lady herſelf, I had no opportunity, for either Madame Vallery, or Agatha, never failed being with her whenever I was preſent.

" As I have heard from the Abbeſs that your grandfather was acquainted with your being placed in the family of Count de Chattelherhault, I ſhould

imagine, when it is known in England that the daughter of ſuch a nobleman is reſident there, if he ſhould be ſtill alive, and poſſeſſed of the ſmalleſt ſpark of humanity, he will either acknowledge your relationſhip to him, or by ſome means procure you an honourable protection.

"The miniature which accompanies this letter, I took from the boſom of your mother, after her gentle ſoul had forſaken its earthly tabernacle;—from the fondneſs with which I have ſeen her repeatedly look upon it, and preſs it to her lips, I have no doubt, notwithſtanding the plainneſs of

of its dreſs, that it repreſents ſome of her near friends.

" As it is more than probable that a very few hours may ſever me from the living, I think it neceſſary to have the particulars contained in this paper, read in the preſence of my dear unfortunate daughters, and our revered Father Louis, before whom I ſhall alſo ſign it.

" I remain, deareſt child,

" Your's, moſt affectionately,

" LOUISE D'ALONVILLE.

" The name of the perſon who brought you into the world, is Madame

Madame Chapelle; ſhe is, I believe, yet living at Leige."

Veronica, it will readily be conceived, peruſed this intereſting narrative with profound attention: often during the time ſhe held it in her hand, the tears flowed down her cheeks, and her heart throbbed with convulſive pangs of agony. The idea that thoſe dear departed friends, from whom ſhe had experienced ſo many marks of the tendereſt affection, were not her parents, ſhe was ſcarcely able to reconcile to herſelf; yet the aſſertions of the dying, that they were not ſo, were unanſwerable: for what could poſſibly influence a perſon on the very verge of death, to advance

ſuch

ſuch propoſitions, but a certain conviction of their truth?

She had ſcarcely concluded the Abbeſs's letter, and had time to examine the miniature which accompanied it, when the entrance of ſeveral weeping Nuns informed her that the laſt ſad moment was paſſed, and their Superior for ever removed from this terreſtrial ſtate of miſery.

This, in Veronica's preſent ſtate of mind, was too much for her to bear, and ſhe ſunk upon the boſom of ſiſter Anne, overwhelmed with ſorrow.

The holy ſiſter uſed every endeavour to ſooth her diſtreſs, and reconcile

cile her to the fate of Madame D'Alonville, by aſſuring her that her departure from hence was rather a ſubject of rejoicing than affliction.

"She is at peace," ſighed the Nun; "her pilgrimage, her perſecutions are over, and ſhe has now a permanent abode in thoſe regions of felicity, which we are all ſtriving to arrive at."

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"Enchanting maid, new wonders fix me thine;
The ſoul completes the triumphs of thy face;
I thought—forgive, my fair—the nobleſt aim,
The ſtrongeſt effort of a female ſoul
Was but to chuſe the graces of the day,
To tune the tongue, to teach the eyes to roll,
Diſpoſe the colours of the flowing robe,
And add new roſes to the faded cheek."

DR. JOHNSON.

VERONICA continued only one day with the Nuns after the death of her friend Madame D'Alonville; but hurried towards the manſion

ſion of Lady Strawbenzie, who, ſhe well knew, would be extremely anxious to be made acquainted with the important buſineſs which had occaſioned her journey.

The very apparent agitation of mind in which ſhe arrived at the caſtle, gave the amiable miſtreſs of it much diſtreſs; her Ladyſhip was, however, ſoon convinced from her account of the Abbeſs's departure, and the peruſal of her intereſting letter, that ſhe had juſt cauſe for perturbation.

To ſooth the diſtreſſed mind of her amiable companion, became now the chief care of Lady Strawbenzie; and ſhe

ſhe ſucceeded ſo well, that in a few days her ſpirits were again reſtored to their uſual tone.

The converſation between the two ladies at Strawbenzie Caſtle, the reader will readily ſuppoſe, would very frequently turn upon the hiſtory of Veronica's birth, and the ſingularity of her fortune in being thrown accidentally into the very country ſhe had a right to claim as her own.

"I have no doubt," Lady Strawbenzie would often ſay, "but that your grandfather is dead; for it is impoſſible, as a perſon of diſtinction particularly, that he ſhould be ignorant of your arrival in England, when the

names

names of emigrants of faſhion are ſo generally introduced into the newſpapers. Inquiries, in my opinion, will be uſeleſs; for ſhould there be family reaſons why you cannot be acknowledged, they will not, of courſe, be attended to: you muſt, therefore, truſt to chance for the elucidation of this myſtery.

In this Veronica perfectly acquieſced, and it was agreed that no one, excepting very particular friends, ſhould be made acquainted with her ſingular ſtory. Lady Strawbenzie, however, adviſed, that the portrait, which accompanied the Abbeſs's letter, ſhould be conſtantly worn round her neck, as ſome perſon might, by chance, be acquainted

acquainted with its features, and thus accidentally an affair, which appeared to be hidden under the deepeſt veil of obſcurity, be diſcovered.

Whilſt things were thus, letters arrived to Veronica from the Miſs Sydenhams, acquainting her that no perſon anſwering the deſcription of the man who had occaſioned her ſo much alarm, had, ſince her departure from Lomond, been diſcovered, although the woods had been carefully ſearched, and a watch placed for ſeveral nights. Veronica, however, had ſeen the man too diſtinctly, and recollected his height, ſhape, and dreſs too well, to be convinced, by this information,

information, that her fears had been excited without a ſufficient cauſe.

This affair, although it was in reality but of little conſequence, yet frequently recurred to her memory, and never failed giving her much concern and uneaſineſs; for ſhe was not able to baniſh from her mind the idea, that the perſon ſhe had ſeen was in diſtreſs, perhaps labouring under the dreadful evils of poverty—perhaps an exile from his country, and equally deſtitute of friends as fortune.

Chriſtmas arrived, and with it brought Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie, who, although acquainted with the ſtory of Veronica's birth, yet returned with

with a heart more devoted to her than ever. That ſhe was an Engliſh woman, pleaſed him; for he poſſeſſed that degree of reverence for his country, from prejudice, or whatever cauſe it ariſes, which ſo ſtrongly characterizes the Briton, and which, I doubt not, we ſhall all readily allow exiſts.

Notwithſtanding the kind endeavours of her friends, at the caſtle, to drive the unhappineſs, reſulting from the knowledge of her uncertain birth, from the boſom of Veronica, yet ſhe ſuffered greatly from the recollection of it. Sir Auguſtine, therefore, anxious to try every method of elucidation, without acquainting her with it,

it, addreſſed a letter to Madame Chapelle, the perſon whom the Abbeſs mentioned in her poſtſcript, as having brought her into the world, requeſting her to give every information on the ſubject which was in her power. This, he flattered himſelf, would, in ſome meaſure, explain matters, and reſtore the dear object of his affection to comfort and compoſure.

The many opportunities which Strawbenzie poſſeſſed of contemplating the innumerable good qualities and accompliſhments of Veronica, daily increaſed his affection for her, and alſo convinced him, by many unqueſtionable proofs, that he had the poſſeſſion of a place in her regard, in

which no rival had the power of ſupplanting him. As for the tenderneſs with which ſhe ſo obviouſly cheriſhed the remembrance of her former lover, inſtead of exciting the ſmalleſt unhappineſs, it endeared her to him more than any other circumſtance, as it was a full aſſurance of that amiable ſenſibility of which he was the profeſſed admirer.

In February the return of Lady Strawbenzie's rheumatic gout reminded her that ſhe had propoſed viſiting Bath;—a journey to that city was conſequently fixed upon, and in leſs than a week ſhe arrived there, in company with her nephew, and his beloved Veronica.

CHAP. V.

" Soft unſuſpicious ſiſterhood of mine,
Ere you the hand of innocence beſtow
On wooing man, mark well, I pray,
The temper of his mind! Oh! wed ye not
To brutal ſullenneſs in lordly ſhape,
Or low vulgarity diſguis'd in ſtate;
Unheeding this, incautiouſly I fell
From all the virgin pleaſures of my youth."

ON the arrival of Veronica at Bath, ſhe was delighted to find that the dear friend of her boſom, Lady Riverſdale, was reſident there; ſhe flew to

her immediately, impatient to impart the ſingular incidents which had occurred during her viſit at, and ſince her departure from, Lomond. Her reception by the dear Fanny was ſuch as ſhe expected—tender in the extreme; but nothing can equal the diſtreſs which ſhe felt at perceiving the moſt obvious alteration for the worſe, which was manifeſted in both her perſon and appearance; the bluſh of health no longer illumined her ſweet countenance, ſallowneſs had uſurped its place, and her whole frame bore the melancholy prognoſtics of approaching diſſolution.

She

She was ſeated on a ſofa when Veronica entered, and ſcarcely able to ſupport her weak form in riſing to ſalute her, without the aſſiſtance of a cane, which lay upon the work-table near her.

"Alas!" ſighed Mademoiſelle, mentally, "what a ſad monument of paternal ambition! Certainly the philanthropic heart of Mr. Clavering would throb with agony at the contemplation of this ſcene."

"I can account for your ſurpriſe at ſeeing me thus changed," ſaid Lady Riverſdale, who perceived the diſtreſs, and ſtill retained the hand of Veronica within her own; "but

don't afflict yourſelf about me, for I am, I can aſſure you, much better than I was previous to my arrival at Bath.

"But why," aſked Mademoiſelle, "did you conceal your ſituation from me?"

"Alas!" anſwered her Ladyſhip, "I was unwilling to add to your diſtreſſes, or to prevent, by my complaining, the return of happineſs to a boſom ſo deſerving of it."

Veronica enquired after Lord Riverſdale.

"He

"He has been on a hunting party in the country above a fortnight," was the reply.

"And can he leave you thus?" exclaimed Mademoiſelle. "Inhuman monſter!" ſhe was going to add, but ſhe checked herſelf.

A deep-drawn ſigh was all the reply of Lady Riverſdale; who, anxious to change the converſation, now proceeded to inform her that Mr. and Mrs. Clavering were expected in Bath in a few days; with many inquiries reſpecting her viſit in Scotland.

The intereſting circumſtances which occurred at Lomond, and the ſubſe-

quent information which had been conveyed to Veronica by Madame D'Alonville's letter, took up much time in communicating, and ſo occupied the attention of both the ladies, that they never once thought how far the morning was ſpent, until the ſervants entered with Lady Riverſdale's dinner. This reminded Veronica that ſhe had promiſed to be in the Creſcent by half after four o'clock, and ſhe immediately aroſe to take leave; not, however, before ſhe had agreed to ſpend the whole of the next day with her ſick friend.

Sir Auguſtine and Lady Strawbenzie were greatly afflicted at hearing of Lady Riverſdale's melancholy ſituation;

tion; and confirmed by it in their belief of the innumerable reports, which were in circulation, of her huſband's ſtrange behaviour.

After an early breakfaſt on the following morning, Veronica proceeded towards Lanſdown-Place. The day was ſpent in mutual inquiries and communications; and Mademoiſelle collected from the converſation of her friend, although ſhe was too generous openly to confeſs it, that the unkind behaviour and inattention of Lord Riverſdale had, in a great meaſure, reduced her to her preſent alarming ſituation.

The firſt week of Veronica's arrival at Bath was chiefly ſpent at the lodgings of her ſick friend; and ſhe had, in the courſe of it, the felicity of perceiving, what hope flattered her were, the unqueſtionable ſymptoms of her returning health.

Letters now arrived to Lady Riverſdale, acquainting her that her father and mother were on their journey to Somerſetſhire. This information had a conſiderable effect upon her mind, as ſhe had ſeen them very little ſince her marriage, and well knew how ill they would be prepared to meet the alteration in her appearance, which ſhe was now altogether incapable of concealing. They had been made

made acquainted with her invalid ſtate; but the violence of her diſorder, which the phyſicians almoſt feared would terminate in a conſumption, had never been communicated to them, in hopes that a change for the better might prevent the uneaſineſs which an acquaintance with the whole of this melancholy truth muſt unavoidably have occaſioned.

CHAP. VI.

" For what new wonders am I yet reſerv'd ?"

THE morning after the arrival of the Claverings at Bath, Veronica, whom gratitude prompted to pay every attention, called at their lodgings, which were in the ſame part of the town with thoſe of Lady Riverſdale. Mr. Clavering was at home alone, and received her in the moſt cordial manner:—he knew her attachment to poor Fanny; he was acquainted with the kind attention

which ſhe had lately paid to her; and this, if poſſible, had raiſed her higher than ever in his eſtimation. She was no ſooner ſeated, than he began with congratulating her upon her approaching connexion with a man ſo deſerving and reſpectable as Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie; adding, how worthy he thought her of ſuch an alliance, both from good qualities, and illuſtrious deſcent.

Veronica bowed, and acknowledged the merits of her lover.

"But, ah!" ſighed ſhe, "my dear Mr. Clavering, he will not take to his arms the repreſentative of the noble houſe of the Count de Chattelherhault;

herhault; but the poor, the unknown Veronica, without a name, without a relation who will condeſcend to acknowledge her."

She could not, for ſome minutes, proceed. Mr. Clavering was overwhelmed with aſtoniſhment. At length ſhe ſo far overcame her diſtreſs, as to again go on.

"What I have ſaid," continued ſhe, "is true; I am not the child of the Count and Counteſs de Chattelherhault, but a diſtreſſed orphan of Engliſh parents."

"Of Engliſh parents!" repeated Mr. Clavering.

"Yes,"

"Yes," returned Veronica, "but I was born in Leige; my unhappy mother was, on account of an imprudent marriage, dragged from her country by her father, to a convent in that city, and there, in the moment which produced me to the light, breathed her laſt. Here," ſaid ſhe, "taking from her pocket-book Madame D'Alonville's letter, "is, excepting the miniature which I wear round my neck, the only certificate which I can produce of my birth."

Mr. Clavering unfolded the paper, but was prevented from peruſing it by Veronica's calling his attention to the portrait ſhe had juſt before mentioned;—his eyes reſted upon it; he

ſnatched

ſnatched it eagerly from her hand, for ſhe had now unlooſed it from the ribbon.

"The features of Janet, by Heavens!" exclaimed he; "To what am I reſerved? From whence did you receive this, Mademoiſelle?"

"From the ſame quarter as the letter," returned ſhe, amazed at his agitation, which almoſt amounted to a paroxyſm of madneſs; "read it, and it will explain all to you."

"It is impoſſible," returned Mr. Clavering, "that I can be compoſed enough to do ſo at preſent. In whoſe poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion was the portrait, when the perſon, who gave it you, found it?"

"It was," anſwered Veronica, "taken from the boſom of my mother when life no longer animated her."

Mr. Clavering groaned aloud; his lips quivered, he attempted to ſpeak, but could not articulate a ſentence. Veronica's aſtoniſhment was much increaſed by perceiving him draw from an opening in the ſide of the painting, which he held in his hand, a ſmall miniature; he held it up to her view, and faltered out, "Do you know theſe features?"

Veronica

Veronica anxiouſly gazed upon them.

"I think," ſaid ſhe, "I have ſeen ſome one who reſembles them; but your diſtreſs, your agitation, ſo diſcompoſe me, that I am ſcarcely collected enough to know any thing accurately."

She looked again, and perceived an inſcription on the lower part of the picture, "The gift of Edward to his beloved Suſan."

"This," ſaid Mr. Clavering, with great heſitation, "repreſents your father!"

"My

"My father!" reiterated Veronica; "my father! And did you know my father, Mr. Clavering? Is he alive?"

"He is! Veronica, he is!" returned Mr. Clavering, "for in me you behold him!"

What a ſcene was this! what pen can deſcribe it! what painter do juſtice to it!

"Tomorrow, Veronica," ſaid Mr. Clavering, "tomorrow, when we are tolerably compoſed, you ſhall know all; for the preſent we muſt part; Mrs. Clavering, I hear, is come home; pay your reſpects to her, but mention

mention not what has paſſed between us. I ſhall afterwards explain it to her; the ſtory is long and melancholy."

Veronica ſat motionleſs for many minutes; at length ſhe gained ſtrength to retire to Mrs. Clavering's apartment, where ſhe was received with all poſſible affability, and every appearance of friendſhip. Whatever antipathies this lady had imbibed, and from whatever cauſe they originated, they appeared, either from abſence, or the expected connexion which the object of them was about to make with the Strawbenzies, to be totally removed.

Mademoiſelle's

Mademoiſelle's viſit was not a long one; ſhe had promiſed to wait upon Lady Riverſdale during the morning, and after the ſcene which had paſſed in Mr. Clavering's ſtudy, was more anxious than ever to be in the ſociety of that amiable friend.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"The hour's now come;
The very minutes bid thee ope thine ear;
Obey, and be attentive."

SHAKESPEARE.

VERONICA ſat with Lady Strawbenzie and Sir Auguſtine until a very late hour; the ſubject of their converſation I need ſcarcely ſay was intereſting, when I acquaint the reader that it was principally occupied by the ſtrange diſcoveries of the morning.

The

The night was, to all parties, equally reſtleſs; and they conſequently met in the breakfaſt-room, on the next morning, at an earlier hour than was uſual. The repaſt was ſcarcely over, when a very large packet was delivered to Mademoiſelle;—it was from Mr. Clavering. With trembling hands ſhe broke the ſeal, and with a palpitating heart read the following words:—

"DEAR VERONICA,

"After the ſcene which paſſed between us yeſterday, I feel myſelf called upon to enter into as early an explanation as poſſible:—I told you I was your father—I certainly am.—Liſten to the narrative I am about

about to relate, and you will no longer have any doubt of the truth of what I advance. You know, I believe, that my name, previous to my marriage with Mrs. Clavering, was Sherard. I was the youngeſt ſon of a large family, and conſequently deſtined to follow one of the profeſſions; divinity was my choice, and I was accordingly ſent to the beſt ſchool which our country afforded. In the village where I received my education, the family of the Earl of Lomond reſided for ſeveral months in the year: his ſons, notwithſtanding their being Roman Catholics, and having a private tutor, attended the grammar-ſchool. Lord Saint Paul, the eldeſt, was about a year older than myſelf; our diſpoſitions

diſpoſitions congenial, our ſtudies the ſame. We became attached to each other. Alas! had he yet lived, how many hours of affliction would have been ſpared to me! but inexorable death broke, ſadly broke the bond of our friendſhip. My intimacy with Saint Paul gave me frequent opportunities of being in the family of his father. On every holiday I was invited there; and even when the family removed into Scotland, was much preſſed to accompany them. One ſummer vacation I did; and paſſed two months in the moſt agreeable ſociety imaginable.

" What a prelude was this to the miſery which I was ſoon to be

involved in! How ill did it prepare me to ſupport my afflictions!

"Saint Paul had three ſiſters; their attention to me was ſuch as we expect from the neareſt relations; they were all handſome and amiable. Lord Saint Paul, however, and myſelf, of the ſame opinion in all things, were more attached to Lady Suſan, than to either of the others; we taught her to ride, and ſhe was the conſtant companion of our amuſements, even when the other young ladies were not of our party. This Lord Lomond did not object to; for he was ſo great an advocate for an active life, that he would ſcarcely have allowed time to the females of his family for their

domeſtic occupations, had it not been for the Counteſs, his wife.

" Often when we were alone, Saint Paul would ſay to me, ' Ned, I think Suſan and you are attached to each other; I hope it is ſo; would to Heaven I had the diſpoſal of her! I know no perſon ſo worthy of her merit as yourſelf; and I have already lived long enough to ſee that titles and fortune are not ſynonimous terms with happineſs. Perſevere in your attachment—in the end it will be rewarded; I know ſhe loves you. I ſhall be of age in two years, and then can ſettle matters.'—

"Converſations like this were often repeated; and before I was aware of it, I was deeply in love. Encouraged by the brother of my charmer, I declared my affection, and met with every return my moſt ſanguine expectations could have prognoſticated; —theſe were halcyon days; but they were ſoon, very ſoon at an end.

"Although at this period I was but ſeventeen, yet I poſſeſſed not an imagination romantic enough to perſuade myſelf I was doing right: I felt my inferiority to Lady Suſan, and eaſily anticipated the reſentment which the Earl would imbibe againſt me, the moment he ſhould be acquainted with my being ſo preſumptuous as to aſpire

aſpire to his daughter's heart. I repreſented my fears to Lord Saint Paul; he entreated me to recollect that both his ſiſter and himſelf would be of age in a few years.—'And then,' ſaid he, 'the conſent of fathers will be out of the queſtion, and my independent property will be ſuch as to provide for us amply, even ſhould Lord Lomond prove inexorable, which, when he finds the extent of your merit, I love him too well to ſuppoſe will be the caſe.'—

"I returned from Scotland to ſchool, flattered by ſuch hopes as theſe. The parting between my Suſan and myſelf was tender in the extreme; the ſcene was the caſtle

near the Loch, and the only perſon, except Saint Paul, who was privy to it, was Janet, an old ſervant, who had nurſed a great number of the family.

"The time at length arrived when the Lomonds once more returned to ——. I found my Suſan's affection for me the ſame as when we parted, but her beauty much improved. What an interview was our firſt! the ſcene yet appears to my imagination in moſt vivid colouring, and the heavenly ſmile ſtill ſeems to beam upon me, which illumined her countenance, when I faſtened to a ribbon round her neck the miniature which you left in my hands. It had been

been ſettled at our parting, that I ſhould have my portrait taken in London; and Suſan, who painted delightfully, gave me a likeneſs of Janet, which ſhould be contrived as a caſe for it, and the ſpring, by which it might be drawn from its confinement, concealed in a border of enamel. This precaution was uſed to prevent any ſuſpicions of her being in poſſeſſion of my portrait; and her attachment to Janet was a ſufficient apology for paying ſo much reſpect to her reſemblance.

"Whilſt things were thus, Lord Saint Paul was taken ſuddenly ill; his diſorder rapidly increaſed, and, in ſpite of medicine, in ſix weeks his

phyſician declared an abſolute conſumption of the lungs had taken place. He was ordered to Briſtol; the journey, however, he could not be perſuaded to undertake unleſs I accompanied him. My father was applied to; and on a promiſe from Lord Lomond, that my education ſhould go on under his ſon's tutor, I was allowed to be of the party.

" We ſet forward a ſad proceſſion; for not one of us had the leaſt idea that either the journey, or the waters, could do any thing for our amiable invalid. I went in the carriage with Saint Paul and my Suſan; often, during the journey, did that affectionate youth join our hands, and with

with eyes raiſed to heaven, implore bleſſings upon our union.—'As I am more than eighteen,' ſaid he, 'I find I have the power of diſpoſing of my perſonal property. I have made a will, and have bequeathed all in my power to Suſan. As ſoon as ſhe is of age, you muſt promiſe me to marry her; ſooner I ſhould wiſh, if my father will conſent to it—and I almoſt hope he will.'—He concluded with a deep ſigh, which, to me, implied the ſad certainty that he too well knew Lord Lomond's diſpoſition to ſuppoſe that he would ever conſent to a connexion between his daughter and a man, both without a long liſt of noble anceſtors, and a heretic.

" Days and weeks paſſed on. Lord Saint Paul grew gradually worſe; the young ladies and myſelf were his conſtant attendants; he now reclined upon his bed, or a ſofa, nearly the whole day, for he was reduced to ſuch a ſtate of weakneſs, as entirely prevented him from uſing the leaſt exertion. I ſlept in the chamber adjoining his dreſſing-room. One morning, as I was inquiring of the ſervant how he had reſted, he called me to the bedſide, and deſiring the attendants to retire, begged me to ſit down near him.—' I have come to a reſolution,' ſaid he, ' of mentioning your attachment to Suſan, to my father, and aſſuring him it was I who gave birth to it, and have hitherto encouraged

encouraged you to perſevere; this he, I think, will attend to. And, ah!' added he, 'that I could live to ſee you united! but that is impoſſible, for I feel a very few days more muſt cloſe my exiſtence.'—

"I begged, as well as my diſtreſs would allow me, that he would not, at a time when every exertion muſt be prejudicial to him, agitate himſelf with an undertaking of this kind, particularly when I was certain that Lord Lomond would never conſent to his propoſals. Saint Paul, however, perſiſted in his reſolution;—'A dying advocate, I think,' ſaid he, 'cannot fail being attended to; in the evening my father will viſit me,

and then I am determined the ſubject which is ſo near my heart, ſhall be mentioned to him.'—

" We were now interrupted; nor had I again an opportunity of converſing with my friend until evening; never day paſſed ſo tediouſly. After tea I walked with the ladies, but I was greatly dejected. Lady Suſan's eye told me ſhe perceived it, but I had no opportunity of unfolding the cauſe to her. At ſupper I ſaw Lord Lomond, and read, in the cloud which hung upon his brow, all that my too well-grounded fears had ſuggeſted. We ſat not long after our repaſt. With a palpitating heart, I aſcended to the chamber of Saint Paul;

Paul; the apothecary was in the anti-room as I paſſed it; I inquired of him concerning my friend; he ſhook his head, and departed in ſilence. This conſiderably increaſed my diſtreſs, as it was a convincing aſſurance that he had now no hopes of his patient. I was ſoon fatally convinced my conjecture was well founded; Lord Saint Paul was greatly altered, his eyes had a peculiar wildneſs, and his manner of ſpeaking much quicker than uſual; he was, however, perfectly rational; he took mine within his own clammy feveriſh hand, and deſired me to take the ſeat which I had occupied in the morning.

'You

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'You

'You were right in your conjecture,' ſaid he, fixing his eyes tenderly upon me; 'Lord Lomond will not hear a word of your union with Suſan. I had hoped he would not have refuſed my dying requeſt,'—(he attempted to conceal, with his handkerchief, the tears which flowed from his eyes)—'but I have been deceived,' added he; 'do not, however, dear Ned, ceaſe to cultivate your attachment to Suſan; ſhe loves you, and in the end will be your's. She is a treaſure worth much trouble in attaining, and in my opinion you are the only man worthy of her. Marry her, I again repeat, when you are both of age; I have made à tolerable proviſion

provision for her, and I hope you will enjoy many happy years together.'—

"I pressed his hand gratefully; I was too much afflicted to give any but an incoherent reply.

"Saint Paul had not strength to say more; he appeared perfectly exhausted; I called the nurse and attendants from the adjoining room, and a composing draught was administered, which soon lulled him to repose. I did not, however, retire to bed; I was unhappy on my own account, and could not have slept; besides, I had a mournful presentiment that the present would be the last night of poor Saint Paul's life. In

a few

a few hours he awoke; he was perfectly ſenſible, but breathed with great difficulty: I was the firſt object his eyes reſted upon; they ſhone with tears of gratitude.—'You are good, indeed,' ſighed he, 'but you will not, my friend, have long to ſhew ſuch tokens of your affection for me, for I perceive a few hours are now all the time I have to live.'—He ceaſed ſpeaking, but in a few minutes again addreſſed me.—'Let my mother and ſiſters be called,' ſaid he, 'for I muſt take leave of them.'—

"Lady Lomond and her daughters were ſoon in the apartment.

"The

" The ſcene I then witneſſed ſtill appears preſent to me; I can neither deſcribe it, nor the affliction of the good Counteſs. She folded her arms round the neck of her dying ſon; he, in return, ſaluted her in the tendereſt way; and then proceeded to embrace his ſiſters;—when he joined his lips to thoſe of Lady Suſan, I diſtinctly heard the ſentence,—' Perſevere in your love to Sherard; he is the man with whom alone you can expect happineſs.'—Theſe were the laſt words he uttered; the dying hour was at hand; the fire which beamed in his eyes, gradually faded; the hectic fluſh on his countenance aſſumed a ghaſtly paleneſs; his breath ceaſed; his heart

no

no longer vibrated; inexorable death reigned triumphant!

" The ladies were conveyed, ſenſeleſs, from the room, whilſt I, in a condition very little better, retired to my apartment. Our breakfaſt, the next morning, was the moſt melancholy meal I ever ſat down to; we were all too much diſtreſſed to adminiſter conſolation to each other.

" The day following we ſet out for ———; I travelled with Lord Lomond and his eldeſt ſon; and as we went poſt, I ſoon found myſelf under the roof of my tutor.

" In

" In about three weeks after my return, I waited upon the Lomonds; their grief was much abated, and my reception the moſt friendly imaginable: the Earl himſelf paid me much reſpect, and thanked me for my attention to his departed ſon. I was frequently invited to dinner, but perceived that the family made it a point never to leave me alone with Lady Suſan; her eyes, however, often told me how much ſhe longed for an interview, and that ſhe had a great deal to communicate.

" The time now approached when the family uſually removed to Scotland. I felt I ſhould be miſerable if they departed before I had an opportunity

tunity of converſing alone with my Suſan. I contrived a thouſand ways to bring about an interview, but not one on deliberation appeared likely to be ſucceſsful. A note, however, which was given me by Janet, relieved my anxiety, and acquainted me that if I would attend at the pavillion, in the grounds adjoining to Lord Lomond's manſion, that evening at nine o'clock, I ſhould there have an opportunity of realizing my wiſhes.

"I cheerfully obeyed this ſummons, and had a confirmation of my ſuſpicions, that ſhe had many things of conſequence to acquaint me with. She told me that her father had informed

informed her of his converſation with Lord Saint Paul on the evening previous to his death, and aſſured her that an union with me muſt inevitably ſeparate her from her family for ever. What intelligence was this for a lover ſo infatuated as myſelf! my agony was inexpreſſible. I propoſed an immediate elopement. Lady Suſan preſſed my hand tenderly, and ſighed out her diſapprobation of ſuch a ſtep.—'Poor Saint Paul,' ſaid ſhe, 'uſed to ſay I ſhould be of age, and then ——'—'And then!' repeated I, 'it will be an age to that time; things may happen to prevent our union, which I ſhudder to think of; we may be ſeparated for ever.'—'And can you not rely upon me, Edward?' replied

replied ſhe.—'Will you, my dear Suſan,' cried I, 'can you promiſe me that the ſolicitations of your friends will never make you ſo far forget met, as to unite your deſtiny with another?'—'Exact no promiſe from me,' replied ſhe, 'depend upon my generoſity. You falter, my Edward, you heſitate; but I will compoſe you, if it is in my power. Here is my hand! it is your's from this moment; when I have arrived at twenty-one, you ſhall be at liberty publicly to claim it; till then you muſt be patient.'—

"The hour of our parting arrived; we ſettled a correſpondence until we ſhould meet again; my letters were

to

to be directed to the houſe of Janet's ſon, near the Loch. The ſummer paſſed away; I was bleſſed with ſeveral epiſtles. At Michaelmas I was removed from ſchool to the Univerſity of Oxford. Spring again returned, and I began to look forward to the long vacation, when I ſhould, as I deſigned viſiting my old maſter at ——, be bleſſed with a ſight of the object of my affection.

"Whilſt the anticipation of this wiſhed-for event occupied my mind, a letter reached me, which occaſioned a journey to —— much earlier than I had expected. It informed me that the family had been there ſome weeks, and that Lord Montvilliers, an old nobleman

nobleman with whom I was ſlightly acquainted, had been making propoſals to the Earl of Lomond for obtaining the hand of my Suſan. Montvilliers was a man of too much conſequence for Lord Lomond to heſitate in giving an immediate conſent; and he had gone ſo far as to threaten his daughter with a nunnery, in caſe ſhe refuſed to comply with his wiſhes.—'What am I to do, my dear Edward?' ſaid ſhe, in her letter; 'an elopement with you is now the only thing that can ſave me from being a ſacrifice to ambition. Good Heavens, that ſuch a propoſal ſhould come from me! but you know my affection for you, and I truſt will not deſpiſe me for conduct

ſo

ſo indecorous. On Tueſday Lord Montvilliers is to be introduced to me, and how ſoon after that my father may be anxious to fix the marriage, I know not;—the idea of being torn from you diſtracts me; fly to my relief if I am yet dear to you; Janet will watch in the pavilion every evening until ten o'clock, and acquaint you with all that has happened.'—

" After ſuch a letter as this, you will not, Veronica, heſitate to conclude that I acted in obedience to it. I waited upon my tutor, and procured leave to go down into the country. A confidential friend had the goodneſs to furniſh me with the

money neceſſary for a northern expedition.

" I arrived at ——; and, wrapped up in a wide ſurtout, hurried to the pavilion; Janet received me, and from her I learned that Lord Lomond ſtill perſiſted in his reſolution of uniting the hand of Lady Suſan with that of Montvilliers.

" I wrote a note, in pencil, to my dear girl, informing her that I ſhould be, with a chaiſe and four, in the road adjoining to the pavilion, that evening at half paſt twelve, ready to conduct her to whatever place ſhe might appoint.

" The

"The midnight hour arrived; the chaiſe ſet me down at the pavilion; I haſtened to the door—it opened—and, in a moment, I had in my arms 'all that my ſoul held dear.' I ſupported her trembling agitated frame to the carriage;—we drove off. My liberality to the poſtboys encouraged them to make the beſt uſe of their horſes, and we arrived at Gretna-Green many hours earlier than my moſt ſanguine hopes had repreſented to me poſſible. The prieſt, who officiates there, ſoon made us one; and we immediately proceeded towards Edinburgh, where we took lodgings, and reſolved to continue until we could be legally married.

" Poſſeſſed of my Suſan, I now thought myſelf beyond the reach of fortune. I wrote to my Oxford friend in the higheſt ſpirits; and at the ſame time Suſan addreſſed letters to Lord and Lady Lomond, aſſuring them that the ſtep ſhe had taken would never have been thought of, but from the fears that ſhe ſhould be compelled to an union with Lord Montvilliers.

" Let me linger here—theſe were the happieſt moments of my life; but

" The ſpider's moſt attenuated thread,
Is cord, is cable, to man's ſlender tie
On human bliſs—it breaks at ev'ry blaſt."

YOUNG.

" Three

"Three weeks elapſed; we had no letters from our friends. We walked out every day, and made frequent excurſions into the country round Edinburgh;—on our return from one of theſe, I very unexpectedly met with an old ſchoolfellow, who was ſtudying phyſic at this grand northern Univerſity. You may be ſure, notwithſtanding our inclination to remain *incog.* that this rencontre afforded me much ſatisfaction in a part of the iſland where I was ſo little known and acquainted. How ſhort-ſighted are mortals, and how little able to judge what is really for their advantage! My friend preſſed me to accompany him upon a viſit, of one day, to a village a few miles diſtant; the buſineſs was no

leſs than to ſee a lady whom he was engaged to marry. Suſan could not properly be of our party; I was much averſe to leaving her behind, but as ſhe was preſent when my friend introduced the ſubject, and joined him in petitioning me to comply with his requeſt, I could not poſſibly avoid obliging him.

" Our day was pleaſant; it ought, indeed, to have been ſuperlatively ſo, for it prefaced an evening of horrors unſpeakable. At eleven I returned to our lodgings; I found our apartments deſerted. I rung—I inquired for Lady Suſan; the ſervants appearing, ſeemed aſtoniſhed at my return, and I ſoon learned that ſome hours previous

previous to the time of my coming home, a chaiſe had arrived, and a note for my wife, acquainting her that my horſe had thrown me, and that I was dangerouſly hurt. She of courſe inſtantly entered the carriage, and was driven off.

" What a ſituation did this information plunge me into! I immediately conceived the extent of my miſery; I knew that Lord Lomond muſt have been on the watch, and have taken the opportunity of my abſence to gain poſſeſſion of his daughter. What courſe to take I knew not; I inquired on all the different roads round Edinburgh, without being able to hear one ſyllable of

my dear loſt angel, or even to trace which way ſhe had been carried. I proceeded immediately towards ——. I wrote to Lord Lomond, demanding my wife, but only received my letter in return, with a few lines on the blank ſide, acquainting me that no ſuch lady as I inquired after was there.

" I ſoon learned in the village that Lord Lomond had been from home ſome weeks, and that not a word, reſpecting Lady Suſan's elopement, had tranſpired. I waited in the neighbourhood a few days in diſguiſe, hoping, by ſome means, to obtain intelligence of my Suſan. I ſoon heard that it was generally believed her Ladyſhip was gone on the Continent

tinent with an intention of taking the veil, and that her father had accompanied her ſeveral weeks previous to the preſent time.

" I wrote repeatedly to Lady Lomond, requeſting that ſhe would give me ſome information of my wife; my letters were anſwered in the moſt laconic way, but by whom I never could diſcover. The laſt I received contained only theſe words:—' The age of Lady Suſan precludes you from legally claiming her as your wife; take advice from a friend—give up the purſuit of her—ſhe is, and ever will be, beyond your reach; return to College, and think yourſelf fortunate in being ſo leniently dealt

with by a family you have ſhamefully injured.'—

" I wrote to a friend high in the law; I ſtated my caſe to him. His anſwer aſſured me that a marriage at Gretna-Green gave me no kind of legal power over Lady Suſan, and that appeals to the Courts of Juſtice were both uſeleſs and unavailing. This was death to my hopes; you may gueſs my ſtate of mind.

" Letters from my relations, who diſcovered, by ſome means, where I was, now reached me; they adviſed an immediate return to Oxford. I therefore ſtayed but a ſhort time at ——; however, it was long enough for me to

to be made acquainted with Lord Lomond's return, and that he came alone.

" As I was getting into the chaiſe, in order to return to the Univerſity, the following note was given me from Lord Lomond:—

' Any inquiries reſpecting Lady Suſan will be unprofitable; ſhe is ſafe within the walls of a convent, where ſhe will be treated with greater lenity in proportion to the degree of ſilence you preſerve reſpecting your acquaintance with her. To perſecute you for your unwarrantable conduct, in pity to your youth, I ſhall

forbear. Generoſity has often a better effect than ſeverity.

'Your's

'LOMOND.'

"I returned to College; I was dejected for many months. Our vacation arrived; I went down into the country, accompanied by the utmoſt depreſſion of mind.

One day the poſt brought me a letter—it was in the well-known hand of my Suſan; no date, by which the time or place in which it was written, was to be found; the contents were as follows:—

'DEAREST

'DEAREST EDWARD,

'I ſtill live, and live but for you, whom, alas! ſhocking to pronounce, I muſt never more behold! A ſolemn promiſe, drawn from me by my father, prevents me from diſcloſing the place of my reſidence; this would not have been complied with, had I been able to have obtained, without it, an aſſurance that you ſhould not be proſecuted reſpecting our elopement. I hope the perſon who promiſes to convey this to the poſt, will prove faithful; if ſhe does, I will ſometimes write to you. A pledge of our mutual love will ſoon ſee the light. Oh, that the nurſe's part may not be taken from me! if it is, I never ſhall be able to ſupport it.

Adieu,

Adieu, deareſt Edward! I know, by my own affliction, the extent of your's; but, as you love me, compoſe yourſelf, and invite happineſs, by every poſſible allurement, to again become an inhabitant of your boſom; for an inſuperable bar is fixed for ever againſt your union with the unfortunate

'SUSAN.'

"Month rolled on after month; at length a newſpaper conveyed to me the terrible melancholy information, that on a certain day 'died, at a convent in Leige, Lady Suſan Lomond.'—This was ſoon corroborated by accounts received from town, that her family were in deep mourning. I gave

gave myſelf up to grief for ſome time, and abſolutely refuſed every conſolation which was offered to me. The idea of my dear departed Suſan, and her infant, which, if alive, I concluded muſt be loſt to me for ever, perpetually preſented themſelves to my view. I wrote to Lord Lomond, begging ſome account of the child; my letter was returned, with theſe words upon the back:—

'How you ſhould ſuppoſe there was a child, I know not; there is no neceſſity for any inquiries or ſurmiſes, as they are equally uſeleſs. Be ſilent for your own ſake.'

"My

" My health ſuffered much from my affliction, and once I almoſt yielded to hopes that I ſhould be releaſed from this life of miſery; but deliberation convinced me of the turpitude of ſuch wiſhes, and I uſed every means to haſten my recovery. I was ſucceſsful; but ſtill my ſpirits were too much relaxed ever to be reſtored. I returned to my ſtudies. I took my degree, and went into orders. Five years elapſed, and I married. You are acquainted with the reſt of both your own and my hiſtory.

" I ſhall call upon you in the evening, when I hope the perturbation,

bation, which muſt unavoidably be occaſioned by this letter, will have ſubſided. For the preſent, adieu!

"Your affectionate father,

"E. S. CLAVERING."

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

——"And muſt
"This dear warm hope become an empty dream?"

MR. CLAVERING, according to appointment, called at Lady Srawbenzie's lodgings in the evening. The interview between him and his daughter was the moſt affecting imaginable. As ſoon as they were ſufficiently compoſed, plans of introducing Veronica to the Lomonds, as a relalation, were conſidered of. Lord Lomond,

Lomond, her grandfather, was now dead, and the preſent repreſentative of the family had been abſent from England ſome years previous to his father's death, ſo that the Dowager Counteſs was the only perſon who could, at the preſent, be applied to. As this lady was a particular friend of Lady Strawbenzie's, ſhe undertook the office of communicating to her the Lady Abbeſs's letter, with ſuch extracts from Mr. Clavering's as might be neceſſary.

This was immediately done; and in about ten days, an anſwer arrived from Lady Lomond, which I ſhall, without heſitation, lay before my reader.

" DEAR

"DEAR LADY STRAWBENZIE,

"That the young perſon, for whom I conceived ſo great an affection during her viſit at Lomond-Houſe, ſhould be my grandchild, was information ſo ſingular and unexpected, that you will with little difficulty ſuppoſe the aſtoniſhment with which I peruſed your's. The proofs which you offer me of her being ſo, are ſcarcely neceſſary; Nature tells me, in tones the moſt intelligible, that ſhe is the daughter of my Suſan. That any offspring of that my favourite child, exiſted, until the moment in which I read your letter, I had no idea; of courſe, I was acquainted with her elopement with young Sherard, and the reſentment which my departed

Lord

Lord indulged againſt her for that raſh ſtep. I alſo knew that he purſued her, and found an opportunity of conveying her from her lover to a convent at Leige. The ſubſequent events I was never acquainted with, Lord Lomond's letters from the Abbeſs never being ſhewn to me. The only intelligence reſpecting my child, which was allowed to reach me, was the account of her death. The reaſon of a ſecrecy ſo painful to me, I can only account for, by ſuppoſing that my Lord imagined, as a tender mother, I ſhould interfere in a way which might not pleaſe him. I had petitioned him at the time of the elopement, and begged that he would not purſue them; but was

repulſed in a manner which prevented me from again renewing the ſubject. I had no ſooner concluded reading your letter, and recovered from the ſurpriſe which it occaſioned, than it occurred to me, that a cabinet of Lord Lomond's papers was in my poſſeſſion, which, as not being his executor, I had never examined, but left untouched until the time when my ſon ſhould return to England; this I reſolved immediately to apply to. For ſome time I was apprehenſive that my ſearch would be unſucceſsful; I peruſed, indeed, ſeveral of the Abbeſs's letters, but they only contained what I was acquainted with before; at length, in the concluſion of one of them, I found a ſentence to

this import:—'Conſidering the *ſituation* of Lady Suſan, ſhe is as well as it is poſſible to expect.'—This was an aſſurance that a child muſt have been brought forth by her. I had nearly finiſhed reading the whole of the papers, when I recollected a ſecret drawer, where, I had heard Lord Lomond ſay, he uſed to keep his moſt valuable papers. I unlocked it; ſeveral rolls of paper preſented themſelves, with many looſe letters;—the firſt I took up was from Madame D'Alonville; I have a ſufficient knowledge of the language to be able to tranſlate the part of it which I wiſh to communicate to you:—

'The perſon, into whoſe hands the female infant of the late Lady Suſan Lomond

Lomond is delivered, is Veronica, wife to the Count de Chattelherhault;—as the Count ſuppoſes the child to be his own, there is no doubt of every care and attention being paid to it, and its relationſhip to your Lordſhip's family will, by this means, remain for ever buried in oblivion.'——

"This letter ſo ſtrongly corroborates thoſe of Madame D'Alonville and Mr. Clavering, that I ſhall, without heſitation, introduce Veronica to our relations and friends as my granddaughter. I need not add how I long to fold the beloved girl in my arms. You know we had fixed to viſit town during the ſpring; this diſcovery will haſten our journey there, and I hope, by three weeks at the

fartheſt,

fartheſt, we ſhall be inhabitants of —— Square.

"Such a letter as this, your Ladyſhip will allow to be a ſerious undertaking for an old woman of ſeventy; and if inaccuracies crowd it, ſurely her age pleads an excuſe.

"I am your's ſincerely,

"SUSAN LOMOND."

A few lines from the Counteſs, and affectionate letters from both the Miſs Sydenhams, to Veronica, accompanied Lady Strawbenzie's epiſtle, the peruſal of which gave her ſuch tranſport, as cannot eaſily be deſcribed.

She was now no longer the friendleſs deſerted emigrant, torn from her country and connexions; but in a land which ſhe could claim as her own, and ſurrounded by her neareſt relations. What a change! what unhoped-for happineſs ſhe had arrived to! Years of comfort were now the only proſpect to which ſhe had a right to look forward. To add to the ſatisfaction which ſhe felt, letters now arrived from the different branches of the Lomond family, acknowledging, with pleaſure, their relationſhip, and congratulating her on the agreeable diſcoveries which had lately been made.

During

During the continuance of Veronica at Bath, ſhe divided her time, as nearly as poſſible, between the families of her father and Lady Strawbenzie. Mrs. Clavering appeared to partake of the general joy; and, as ſhe was conſcious, from Mademoiſelle's connexion with the Lomonds, that ſhe would not interfere in pecuniary matters with her own children, did not heſitate to acknowledge, and behave to her, in every reſpect, like a daughter-in-law.

The ſerenity which appeared daily to increaſe in the mind of his Veronica, greatly augmented the felicity of Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie, and

he now eagerly expected the arrival of the month of May, a period when his happineſs would be ſo firmly rooted, as to bid defiance to the ſtormy winds of fate.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

" Poor panting heart, and wilt thou never
" Reſt within thy troubled ſeat?
" Shall I view the moment ever
" Thou wilt ceaſe awhile to beat?"

FROM METASTASIO.

ABOUT the middle of March, the Lomonds, Strawbenzies, and Claverings had aſſembled in London; and never, ſurely, did any party meet there with more heartfelt ſatisfaction. With the firſt-mentioned family, came letters from the Earl of Lomond, ſignifying his approbation of the

manner in which his mother had acted reſpecting Veronica, and declaring how ready he was to pay the property of his ſiſter into the hands of her repreſentative. This was, excepting the marriage of Sir Auguſtine, and Miſs Sherard, (for Veronica had now aſſumed that name) the only thing wanting to complete the happineſs of all parties, and, of courſe, gave them the greateſt tranſport.

The wedding was now fixed for the third of May, and preparations already begun to be made.

Lady Riverſdale, who continued extremely unwell, was, it may be eaſily ſuppoſed, greatly rejoiced at finding

finding a ſiſter in the friend ſhe had ſo long loved; and with ſo much cheerfulneſs did the diſcovery of this ſingular event exhilarate her ſpirits, that the moſt welcome change was prognoſticated from it. She was not, however, ſo well as to gain permiſſion of her phyſician to remain in London; but adviſed to remove to Richmond, where ſhe was joined, in the beginning of April, by Veronica, who had agreed to paſs the month previous to her marriage, with her. This her relations, without heſitation, complied with, as the ſhort diſtance ſhe was from town did not entirely deprive them of her ſociety.

Lord Riverſdale's preſence at Richmond did not interfere with Veronica's endeavours to compoſe her ſiſter's ſpirits, for he was now on buſineſs at his Iriſh eſtates, which was likely to detain him ſome months; ſhe, therefore, by every means in her power, attempted to reſtore her health, and had the ſatisfaction of perceiving a daily improvement. As the phyſicians had particularly recommended being as much in the open air as poſſible, the two ladies ſpent the greateſt part of their time, when the weather was dry, in walking about the delightful gardens at Richmond.

One

One fine moon-light evening, after Lady Riverſdale had retired to her lodgings, Veronica, tempted by the particular mildneſs of the air, continued her ramble alone. A ſoft melancholy, inſpired by the ſolemnity of the ſurrounding ſcene, hung upon her ſpirits; ſhe wandered penſively along; the ſtrange viciſſitudes of her fortune, and her approaching marriage, were called to her remembrance.

"And, ah!" ſighed ſhe, "my Pontneuf, is it poſſible that I am to be united to any other perſon than yourſelf?"

The idea was too much, and had ſuch an effect upon her, that ſhe could not refrain from tears. She ſeated herſelf in an alcove which was near, and diſregarding, or, perhaps, unconſcious of the lateneſs of the hour, remained for ſome time overwhelmed with her reflections. Some perſon approached; ſhe immediately ſtarted from her ſeat, imagining it to be a ſervant, whom her ſiſter had ſent out in ſearch of her;—the moon ſhone with full brilliance at this moment, and what can equal the terror and amazement of Veronica, when ſhe once more beheld the perſon who had given her ſo much alarm at Loch Lomond! The moment he perceived her, he turned; and before ſhe

was

was able to ſpeak, had penetrated into the ſhrubbery, which ſurrounded the alcove, and was out of ſight in a minute. Her preſence of mind at this interval, was ſuch, that, inſtead of yielding to female fears, ſhe called, in the loudeſt manner ſhe was able, that the ſtranger, whoever he was, would ſtop; her efforts, however, were vain, for ſhe very ſoon even loſt the ſound of his retiring foot-ſteps.

She did not again ſit down, but, with a palpitating heart, proceeded immediately towards Lady Riverſdale's lodgings. The moon had ſo perfectly revealed the figure of this myſterious ſtranger to her, that ſhe could not,

for a moment, heſitate to pronounce him the perſon whom ſhe had ſeen in Scotland—the coat, the hat, the behaviour were the ſame.

The aſtoniſhment of Lady Riverſdale, on hearing the recital of this unaccountable adventure, was very great;—that the ſame perſon ſhould thus appear to haunt the ſteps of her ſiſter, wherever ſhe was, and, inſtead of entering into an explanation of his ſtrange conduct, thus carefully avoid ſpeaking to her, were things that appeared inconſiſtent and irreconcilable.

The two ſiſters, engaged in diſcuſſing this ſtrange affair, ſat longer than

was

was uſual with them; and ſo deep an impreſſion did it leave upon their minds, that when they parted for the night, neither of them was able to compoſe herſelf to ſleep. Conjectures appeared vain, for a veil of ſo thick a texture was ſpread over the buſineſs which ſo engaged their attention, as to entirely bid defiance to penetration.

After breakfaſt, the following morning, the day being extremely fine, Veronica accompanied her ſiſter to the walk, the ſcene of the preceding evening's adventure. She pointed out the exact ſpot where the perſon diſappeared; and on examining the ground, which had been newly raked and dreſſed up,

up, plainly diſcovered traces of a man's foot; this circumſtance, had there remained in Lady Riverſdale any doubts of her ſiſter's accuracy, would have entirely removed them.

The gloom which this curious occurrence caſt over the ſpirits of Miſs Sherard, was ſuch as every effort of her attentive ſiſter could not diſpel — it ſunk deep into her mind; the ſtranger muſt have ſome very particular reaſons for thus breaking in upon her privacy. Perhaps he had ſomething of conſequence to reveal to her, which he could not ſummon reſolution enough to communicate. Perhaps he was a diſtreſſed emigrant, for he had the appearance of

of a foreigner; but, then, how could it be worth his while to travel through the country, merely for an opportunity of ſpeaking to an individual, who could not be expected to have it in her power to aſſiſt him? When imagination had exhauſted every probable conjecture, ſuperſtition would oftentimes endeavour to gain the victory, and repreſent to her, that the figure which had alarmed her, was ſomething ſupernatural; reaſon and deliberation, however, ſoon put a ſtop to ſuch concluſions.

Lady Riverſdale's ſervants made every inquiry in Richmond, and the vicinity, without ſucceſs; as no perſon, anſwering Veronica's deſcription

of the ſtranger, could he heard of. The attendants at the gardens alſo denied ever having admitted or ſeen ſuch a man.

Some days of tedious ſuſpenſe elapſed; the Lomonds and Claverings were made acquainted with the buſineſs, and, of courſe, were as much aſtoniſhed, and unable to account for it, as Veronica and Lady Riverſdale; they, however, agreed it was very probable that Miſs Sherard's fears had created the likeneſs to the man who had occaſioned ſo much anxiety at Lomond, and that the ſtranger whom ſhe had now ſeen, could not be the ſame, but ſome perſon who was accidentally wandering in the gardens.

gardens. They, however, adviſed her in future not to venture alone in the walks at ſuch a late hour.

This had not the deſired effect, for Veronica was fully perſuaded that ſhe was right, and that the man, whoever he might prove to be, had buſineſs of the greateſt importance with her;—ſhe therefore determined to uſe every poſſible means of diſcovering him, and continued to walk in the gardens more frequently than ever, and often until very late in the evening. After Lady Riverſdale retired, however, ſhe took the precaution of having a ſervant within call.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

" Eventful day, how haſt thou chang'd my ſtate!"

DOUGLAS.

LADY RIVERSDALE aroſe at very early hours, and, in general, either walked or rode before breakfaſt. Veronica uſually accompanied her.

One morning, ſome rain having fallen during the night, which rendered the fields damp, they were tempted to purſue the gravel walks of the gardens,

gardens, which are always dry. Veronica, accuſtomed to wander towards the alcove, almoſt mechanically turned to the avenue which led that way; they had proceeded nearly to the end of it, when a noiſe interrupted their diſcourſe.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Miſs Sherard, "I hear footſteps in the walk on the other ſide of the alcove."

They ſtood ſtill for a moment, and diſtinctly heard ſome perſon haſtily retreating. Veronica ran forward—Lady Riverſdale followed; but the perſon was too far diſtant from the alcove for them to diſtinguiſh him correctly;—however, they both plainly perceived,

perceived, through the ſhrubberies, which were yet thin of leaves, that it was a man in a ſlouched hat who occaſioned their alarm. Miſs Sherard, without a moment's deliberation, concluded it to be her unaccountable attendant, and almoſt involuntarily called aloud for him to return; her voice, however, if it was heard, was unattended to, and anſwered only by the echoing woods.

They entered the alcove; but ſcarcely had they ſeated themſelves, when a pocket-book half open, upon the ground, attracted their attention. Lady Riverſdale's maid gave it to her miſtreſs, who inſtantly perceiving that the memorandums it contained

were

were in the French language, exclaimed, "If this pocket-book be the property of your myſterious attendant, Veronica, he is a Frenchman."

Veronica eagerly fixed her eyes upon it; the writing was familiar to her; the colour fled from her countenance, and ſhe had ſcarcely time to turn to the title-page, and point out the name of Pontneuf, which was written there, to her ſiſter, when a fainting fit deprived her of ſenſibility.

At length ſhe recovered.

"To what am I reſerved!" exclaimed ſhe; and at the ſame time

fixed her eyes upon Lady Riverſdale. "Pontneuf lives; he is the ſtranger who has occaſioned me ſo much diſtreſs. Cruel, cruel man, not to have diſcovered himſelf to me! we might then have yet been happy; now, perhaps, it is too late;—but why ſhould I blame him? he has, no doubt, good motives for what he has done."

In ten minutes ſhe was compoſed enough for Lady Riverſdale to propoſe a return home.

"Yes, my deareſt ſiſter," ſighed Veronica, "I will accompany you; but I muſt leave a few lines for Pontneuf, for I am certain it is him; he will, of courſe, return here for his pocket-

pocket-book, and my addreſs will, by that means, reach him."

She immediately wrote, with a pencil, as well as her trembling hand would allow her, the following words:

" DEAREST PONTNEUF,

" If you retain the ſmalleſt regard for the unhappy Veronica, no longer conceal yourſelf from her; haſten to Lady Riverſdale's lodgings in Richmond, and relieve her anxieties."

After placing this billet in the moſt conſpicuous part of the alcove, ſhe retired, as well as her weak tottering frame could ſupport her, to the houſe.

" What

"What a wretch I am!" cried ſhe, the moment they were ſeated in the breakfaſt-room; "how peculiarly diſtreſſing is my deſtiny! ſure never woman was placed in a ſituation ſo afflicting!"

"Conſole yourſelf, my dear ſiſter," returned Lady Riverſdale, "in the idea that the Marquis yet lives, and that you have diſcovered him, before your marriage would have almoſt rendered the thoughts of him criminal."

"Alas!" replied Miſs Sherard, with a deep-drawn ſigh, "it is now too late for happineſs ever more to return to me. How can Pontneuf love

love me, when I have ſo far injured his memory as to engage myſelf with another? He knows of my inconſtancy, and that is the reaſon he thus ſtudiouſly avoids me."

"Rather," ſaid Lady Riverſdale, "allowing that he is acquainted with your engagement with Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie, ſuppoſe his conduct influenced by purer motives; he wiſhes for your eſtabliſhment in a ſituation of life which he is conſcious you deſerve, and which fortune has deprived him of the power of offering to you."

Veronica could only anſwer with ſighs and tears; and it was with difficulty ſhe could be prevailed upon

to take a cup of chocolate, and lie down upon her bed, in order to compoſe herſelf. Every time the bell rung, or any one knocked at the ſtreet-door, ſhe ſtarted with ſomething like a convulſive motion; — it might be her beloved Marquis!

The morning paſſed heavily away; twelve o'clock ſtruck—again the door-bell rung; ſhe raiſed herſelf on the bed—ſhe liſtened—ſhe fancied ſhe heard the wiſhed-for voice in the veſtibule; ſhe aroſe, and walked to the top of the ſtaircaſe; the enchanting ſounds returned; ſhe ruſhed down, regardleſs of her diſhabille, and in a moment was enfolded in the arms of her

her Pontneuf. What a moment was this! What an interview!

"Oh my Pontneuf!"—"Oh my Veronica," were all the words which either of them could utter for ſeveral minutes. At length the Marquis exclaimed, "And may I yet call you mine? Is it poſſible I am ſo bleſſed? I had yielded the hopes of ſuch felicity for ever."

"And could you," interrogated Veronica, "could you have ſeen me another's?"

"My love for you," replied the Marquis, "alone wou'd have enabled me to do ſo. I had but poverty

to ſhare with you, and how could I think of making you a partaker of that, when ſo much better fortune awaited you."

"Generous, noble man!" ſaid Miſs Sherard, "but I muſt, I will be your's; nothing on earth ſhall ſeparate us. My connection with Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie, which you ſeem acquainted with, is from this moment at an end. He knows of my love for you; and when he finds you are alive, I am ſure he poſſeſſes too good a heart to ſuppoſe, for a moment, that I wrong him by declining the honour of his hand. But the Marchioneſs, your mother—? I almoſt tremble to inquire about her."

"She is, unhappily, no more," replied Pontneuf; "the miſeries of her wretched country, I fear, haſtened her death. She was taken ill on the very day on which we had appointed to leave Naples. The horrid accounts of the atrocities committed in Paris, which had reached us a few days previous to that interval, affected her in ſuch a manner, that it brought on a relapſe of her complaints, and in a few weeks plunged her into the grave."

The Marquis continued the whole day at Lady Riverſdale's; it was nearly ſpent in recounting the adventures which had happened to him ſince the death of his mother.

The narrative was, of courſe, intereſting; I ſhall, therefore, without apology, proceed, in my three next chapters, to give ſome account of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

"Alas! had we no ſorrows of our own,
The frequent inſtances of other's woe
Muſt give a gen'rous heart a world of pain."

FATAL CURIOSITY.

IT will be recollected that the laſt accounts which Veronica had received of her lover, were from Naples; theſe informed her that he ſhould quit that city with the Marchioneſs, his mother, who was pretty well recovered, in the month of July.

The reader is, in the laſt chapter, made acquainted with the death of Madame Pontneuf, and the horrid accounts from the metropolis of France, which had been previouſly wafted to the Italian ſhores; theſe terrific reports were not only ſerious in their effects upon the Marchioneſs, but ſtruck a general panic into all the French Nobility who reſided in this part of the world, and fixed them in a reſolution of not again returning to their country, but of drawing as much as poſſible of their property from it.

It was, however, in vain for them to perſuade de Pontneuf to follow their example; the dear object of his adoration

adoration was in Paris, and he might probably aſſiſt in conveying her from that ſcene of confuſion. This idea ſoon overcame every conſideration; and, without paying any other attention to his perſonal ſafety than aſſuming the name of Monſieur Burnier, he proceeded on his journey.

He reached Paris about the middle of September;—this was the ſeaſon when the frenzy of its inhabitants was at the higheſt pitch; every day was ſtained with murder; the public buildings were defaced; the ſanctity of no place rendered it ſecure from violence.

What a metamorphoſed ſcene did his native city preſent to Pontneuf! He had left it the ſeat of elegance and politeneſs;—he wandered about the ſtreets almoſt unable to recollect the manſions of his former friends, or the convents which he had been acquainted with. He walked towards the hotel de Chattelherhault,—it was in ruins; the avenue of trees, which led to its grand front, was deſtroyed—the blackneſs, occaſioned by recent fire, was viſible upon the fractured walls! He wandered through ſeveral apartments of this once magnificent houſe,—all was ſilent and deſerted; nor was there a veſtige of furniture remaining. He was ſcarcely able to inquire of ſome caſual paſſengers the

fate of the noble owners, or ſurpriſed at the dreadful information that they were *all maſſacred.*

Overwhelmed with miſery, he was quickly retiring from the ſpot, when a meanly dreſſed old woman preſented herſelf to him.

"Do I," exclaimed ſhe, perceiving him in tears, "do I once more behold a perſon with a heart capable of ſympathizing with my ſorrows?"

The Marquis ſtarted at an addreſs of this kind, in ſuch a place, and from ſuch a perſon; he looked ſteadily at her,—he fancied her features were

familiar to him. She, in return, eyed him with particular attention.

"Can it be Monſieur le Marquis de Pontneuf?"

"Can it be Ninon?"

They both interrogated at the ſame moment, and were both anſwered in the affirmative.

"But who," cried the old woman, "could have thought we ſhould have met in this manner, and at this place! It is, however, Monſieur, fortunate for you that you have ſeen me, for I am the only perſon able to

to give you any account of the dear Mademoiſelle Veronica."

"Is ſhe alive, then?" exclaimed Pontneuf; "gracious Heaven, how I thank thee!"

"She is," replied Ninon, "ſhe is in England; but follow me to my ſon's, and I will tell you all; in this place we are expoſed to obſervation, and every action is ſcrupulouſly examined."

Pontneuf followed in ſilence; the idea that his Veronica was alive, and in ſafety, ſpread a gleam of ſatisfaction over his mind, which had long been abſent from it.

At

At the houſe of Ninon's ſon, he was made fully acquainted with the ſad cataſtrophe of the Chattelherhaults, and the name of the perſon with whom their daughter had quitted France. This information immediately inſpired him with a reſolution of endeavouring to accompliſh a journey to England, the difficulties attending which were completely removed by the hopes of meeting with her who was alone able to alleviate his affliction.

Pretending that he had buſineſs at Abbeville, he immediately applied at the police-office for a paſſport to that place, hoping, that if he could once get ſo far on his road, he ſhould, without difficulty, proceed

proceed to Calais, or ſome other town on the coaſt. So many perſons had eluded them, that the officers of police were now extremely cautious; in conſequence of which, either from ſomething in the perſon or manners of the Marquis, his application to them was unſucceſsful; and, to increaſe the unpleaſantneſs of his ſituation, he was thrown into priſon. To expoſtulate was vain;—commitments were now ſo common, and theſe without any thing criminal attaching to the priſoner, that appeals were abſolutely uſeleſs.

Into what a ſituation was the miſerable Pontneuf now plunged! That he ſhould never more be bleſſed with

with the ſight of his Veronica, appeared a certainty.

He found the priſon much crowded, and with perſons, in general, as unhappy as himſelf, and confined upon occaſions equally trivial.

Time rolled on;—he received no ſummons to appear before the tribunal; his companions were daily changed; numbers were dragged to the bar of mock juſtice, and heard of no more;—their places were, however, conſtantly ſupplied. A year elapſed; he applied to the perſon who furniſhed the daily ſupply of proviſions; he thought he was forgotten, and death itſelf appeared preferable

preferable to the miſery he now endured. The man, who poſſeſſed ſome ſparks of humanity, begged him to be ſilent.

"There is no appeal now," ſaid he; "your trial may come on ſooner than you are aware of; you may yet be ſet at liberty."

This inſpired ſomething like hopes that he might be able, one day, to viſit England; and enabled him to ſupport his confinement better than he could have expected.

To picture the miſeries which this unfortunate young man endured in this wretched place, is a taſk

taſk of difficulty I am not able to undertake; yet they were tolerable, indeed, to what he muſt inevitably have undergone, had the real rank which he poſſeſſed been known. The time of his liberation, however, approached; the priſons throughout Paris were now extremely crowded, and from a number of perſons having lately been apprehended under ſuſpicion of abetting the Royaliſt party, the rooms in them greatly wanted. Orders were conſequently given, by the National Convention, that all priſoners were to be immediately ſummoned to their trials. Night, in order to prevent tumult, was the time fixed upon for the removal of thoſe unhappy perſons; and about twelve o'clock the National Guards

Guards proceeded to eſcort them. All, it will be ſuppoſed, in theſe habitations of wretchedneſs, was confuſion when the military arrived.

Pontneuf, ſunk upon his ſtraw mattreſs, was awakened with an unuſual noiſe, and had ſcarcely time to throw around him his ragged garment, before ſeveral of the ſoldiers entered his cell, and communicated to him that it was the deſign of the Convention to immediately interrogate him;—he was very ſoon in the court-yard with his wretched companions.

The ſcene, only illumined by a few glaring flambeaus, was the moſt melancholy that can be conceived; never

never did a group of objects appear ſo wretched—each was too much overwhelmed with his individual feelings to attempt offering conſolation to the perſon who ſtood next him. An immediate maſſacre was the predominant idea with them all; even if this ſhould not be the caſe, they too well knew the conciſe trials, and bloody ſentences, which the French tribunals were now in the habit of giving, to imagine they had many hours to live—death, on all hands, appeared inevitable!

The gates were uncloſed; the ſad proceſſion moved on; they had ſcarcely proceeded the length of two ſtreets, before another party of wretches,

wretches, equally unhappy, and going on the ſame ſad errand, met them. This, as may readily be imagined, gave riſe to much confuſion; for the ſoldiers of each party, anxious, no doubt, to finiſh the buſineſs they were employed on as ſoon as poſſible, commanded thoſe perſons under their care, to haſten along. Both the crowds preſſed forward—all was ſoon confuſion; the priſoners, inſpired with hopes of effecting an eſcape, by means of the general diſorder, ruſhed together, and made an attempt to diſarm their conductors. The ſoldiery perceiving this, without heſitation, fired upon them; hundreds fell; ſeveral fled along the adjoining ſtreets;

ſtreets; theſe the military purſued, and moſt of them were killed.

Pontneuf was, fortunately, amongſt the few who eſcaped with life; he ſheltered in the firſt dark alley which preſented itſelf, and being perfectly acquainted with the town, ſoon found his way to a remote and unfrequented part of it. He recollected the houſe of Ninon's ſon—perhaps ſhe might yet be alive; ſhould this prove to be the caſe, he would be ſure of an aſylum.

When it was daylight, he knocked at the door; and, without deliberation, notwithſtanding his ſqualid and forbidding appearance, was admitted.

Citizen

Citizen Duprè knew him immediately, and ſoon informed him that his mother, the faithful Ninon, died a few weeks ſubſequent to his interview with her near the hotel de Chattelherhault.

Pontneuf could ſcarcely refrain from tears when he heard of the fate of this valuable old woman; but a few moments' conſideration convinced him that he ought rather to rejoice that ſo worthy a creature was removed from a ſcene where nothing but diſtreſs and miſery was ever likely to await her.

Duprè had too much humanity, and too great a reſpect for thoſe perſons to whom his mother had been attached,

attached, to hesitate offering every relief and consolation to the Marquis, which his situation in life afforded.

A comfortable bed and wholesome provision had been things so long rare to the unfortunate Pontneuf, that the homely accommodation, found at the house of this worthy grocer, was luxurious to a degree; and, had his mind been free from the apprehensions of again falling into the hands of his jailers, and assured that his Veronica was in safety, and that he should again behold her, he would have slept in perfect composure.

Amidst all his distresses, he had still preserved, by concealing it in his dress,

dreſs, a ſmall ſum of money, and two very valuable rings. The caſh was ſufficient to ſee him acroſs the country; but the queſtion was, how ſuch a journey could be effected? After much deliberation, a plan was thought of, which was attended with the deſired effect. A baſket, with ſome of his hoſt's articles of trade in it, gave him the appearance of a porter, and he paſſed the gates of Paris without interrogation. He was ſoon many miles in the country; and, after ſeveral tedious days, reached Calais.

The difficulty now was, how he ſhould procure a paſſage to the oppoſite ſhore. A paſſport was here as neceſſary as at Paris; his diſtreſs,

however, on this account was of ſhort duration; he walked every day along the ſhore, contemplating, with a melancholy ſatisfaction, the faint view of the iſland which contained his beloved Veronica.

During one of theſe ſolitary rambles, he perceived an Engliſh veſſel at anchor—her boat was gone aſhore on ſome buſineſs. A thought occurred to him, perhaps, if he watched its return, he might, by making a ſignal, be taken on board:—he ſoon perceived the boat retiring from the ſhore; he waved his hat, and called as loud as he was able; he was ſoon underſtood, and perceived the ſailors rowing

rowing towards him; he entreated them to take him in.

John Bull, with all his ſingularities, is acknowledged to poſſeſs much humanity; Monſieur was, in conſequence, received into the veſſel with the greateſt civility. He made known his peculiar diſtreſſes to the Captain, who, although but the commander of a ſmuggler, yet gave him every kind aſſurance that he was in ſafety.

The veſſel was bound for the northern coaſt, and in a few days the Marquis landed at Scarborough.

CHAP. XII.

" Give me thy grief, I pray thee;
I have a heart can ſoftly ſympathize,
And ſympathy is ſoothing."

MASON.

THE Marquis de Pontneuf no ſooner arrived at Scarborough, than he waited upon a jeweller, and diſpoſed of his rings, which, although they did not bring him quite ſo much as he had a right to expect, yet produced a ſum of money ſufficient, with tolerable economy, to ſupply his expences

expences until he could have his property remitted from Naples.

He was now in the country which he had every reaſon to conceive contained his beloved Veronica. He was now ſecure from the purſuit of French tyranny; his ſituation was, therefore, comparatively happy to any that he had been in for many, many months; but he had yet ſeveral difficulties to encounter, and anxieties to undergo; the part of the kingdom in which Mademoiſelle reſided, was unknown to him; ſhe might not have fallen into hands ſo reſpectable as could be wiſhed; ſhe might be dead, or married.

After a variety of ſchemes for diſcovering her abode and ſituation, he at length fixed upon that of proceeding immediately to London; there he ſhould be certain to meet with numbers of his countrymen, and amongſt them, probably, gain the wiſhed-for information.

In order to be as economical as poſſible, he determined to proceed upon his journey on foot, and only occaſionally take the advantage of the ſtage coaches. A walk, however, of two hundred and fifty miles was an undertaking which the fatigues of a ſea voyage rendered him altogether unfit for without a few days' reſpite; he, therefore, agreed to continue at Scarborough

Scarborough until the beginning of the following week, to recover his ſtrength.

To amuſe himſelf, he every day rambled along the ſhore, and ſometimes into the public walks; for although he had neither ſpirits nor money ſufficient to enable him to mingle in the faſhionable parties which frequented them, yet he found the being merely a ſpectator of their happineſs increaſed his own. He one night ventured to the theatre; a London actreſs had drawn an immenſe crowd — the play was "Iſabella;" he underſtood ſufficient of the Engliſh language to enter into the ſpirit of the author, and was

liſtening, with profound attention, to one of the moſt pathetic ſpeeches, when his attention, and that of the whole audience, was called to a young lady in one of the boxes who had fainted. She appeared recovering, and again opened her eyes; the company, excepting one lady and a gentleman, had retired from the box, in order to admit air; this allowed him to view her attentively; ſhe ſtrongly reſembled his Veronica—his eyes were rivetted on her; he was convinced that his ſuppoſition muſt be right—the form, the countenance, the ſenſibility, were ſuch as no one but that dear girl poſſeſſed;—he ruſhed, unconſcious of what he was about, from the pit into the avenue which led to

the

the boxes; he attempted to open the door of that which he conceived to contain his charmer, but was interrupted by the box-keeper.

"You cannot go there," said the fellow.

Pontneuf had forgot that his mean dress was a sufficient reason against his appearance in that part of the house; this now occurred to him, and instead of being angry with the man, he mildly said, "Is the young lady, who fainted, in this box?"

"She was," anſwered the man, "but ſhe is juſt now getting into her carriage."

"Who is ſhe?" interrogated the Marquis.

"That I cannot anſwer," returned the box-keeper, but I ſuppoſe, wife to the gentleman who accompanied her, for they are always together."

What information was this for poor Pontneuf! he was ſcarcely able to ſtagger acroſs the lobby to the entrance of the theatre.

"Veronica

"Veronica married! wretched, miſerable Pontneuf!" groaned he, as he ruſhed, heedleſs of every thing around him, down the ſteps which led to the ſtreet.

A carriage had juſt driven off; he inquired what perſons were in it, and was informed Sir Auguſtine and Lady Strawbenzie.

This was enough: he hurried along a ſtreet which led to a terrace overlooking the ſea, and there threw himſelf on a ſeat overwhelmed with agony. Notwithſtanding it was now more than nine o'clock, many perſons yet remained upon the walk; ſeveral were attracted by his diſtreſs,

but probably from a fear of being thought officious, paſſed on without ſtopping to inquire whether they could aſſiſt him.

An elderly gentleman who had, the whole of the time, obſerved him with particular attention, continued walking till the other company had all departed; he then ſeated himſelf on the bench where our miſerable Frenchman reclined, and, in a voice ſtrongly expreſſive of benevolence, addreſſed him:—

"You appear unhappy, Sir," ſaid he; "is there any thing in which I can aſſiſt you?"

Theſe

These words, and from an entire ſtranger, affected Pontneuf in ſuch a manner, that he could not refrain from tears.

"You are very kind, Sir," replied he; "I am grateful for your attention to me; but you cannot render me any aſſiſtance."

The old gentleman, who was no other than Clifton, Lady Strawbenzie's venerable chaplain, perceived, from his broken Engliſh, that he was a foreigner;—this redoubled his aſſiduity, and awakened his compaſſion to a ſtill greater degree.

"I

"I beg pardon, Sir," ſaid he, "for being officious and inquiſitive, but I perceive you are from the Continent; perhaps you have but juſt landed, and, being a ſtranger, have not been able to procure lodgings;—will you permit me to point out ſome to you?"

"I have been in England four days, and have lodgings," anſwered the Marquis.

"Perhaps, Sir," rejoined Clifton, "you are not yet acquainted with ſuch of your countrymen as are in this part of the country; I am in habits of converſing with them, and can introduce you."

"Are

"Are there many here?" aſked Pontneuf.

"Several," replied Mr. Clifton.

"And you know them all?" returned the young Frenchman. It occurred to him, that, perhaps, his kind companion might be able to give him ſome information of Veronica. "Do you know Lady Strawbenzie?" continued he.

"Perfectly well," anſwered Clifton.

"Was ſhe at the Theatre this evening?"

"She

"She was."

"How long has she been married?"

"She has been a widow these twenty years."

"Who, then, is Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie?"

"Her nephew."

"Is he married?"

"No, Sir."

Pontneuf's heart beat violently; he muſt have inquired after the wrong carriage;

carriage; or, perhaps, the box-keeper had deceived him, when he aſſerted that the young lady, who had fainted, had quitted the Theatre, merely to get him away from the lobby. He ſat ſome minutes ſilent; at length he renewed his enquiries.

"Among the French emigrants you are acquainted with, did you ever hear of Mademoiſelle de Chattelherhault?"

"Yes, Sir," replied the Chaplain, "I know her perfectly; ſhe is now in Scarborough. Are you acquainted with her?"

"I

"I was once!" replied the Marquis, with a deep ſigh.

"Can you be the Marquis de Pontneuf?" interrogated Clifton.

Pontneuf ſtarted; he at length faltered out, "I am!"

"Gracious Heaven," exclaimed the reverend almoner, "how intricate are thy works!"

He then proceeded to explain to Monſieur who he was, and the events which had befallen Veronica ſince her reſidence in England. Her engagement with Sir Auguſtine he glanced over very ſlightly; but he ſaid

ſaid ſufficient to awaken, in the breaſt of his auditor, an idea that ſome ſuch connection exiſted; beſides, the information of the box-keeper was quite enough to convince him that what he feared was true.

"But I cannot blame her," ſighed he; "ſhe thinks me dead."

"And I aſſure you, Monſieur," ſaid Clifton, "it was long, very long, before ſhe could perſuade herſelf to attend to Sir Auguſtine's overtures; even now you are the perpetual ſubject of her thoughts, and, to her lover, ſpoken of in the moſt tender affectionate manner imaginable."

"Dear,

"Dear, generous girl!" exclaimed the Marquis, "but I will not interrupt your returning happineſs; I will not prevent you from being placed in a ſituation to which you will do ſo much credit; I will not be cruel enough, by informing you that I yet live, to reduce you to be the partner, the ſharer of my poverty. No! ſome remote corner ſhall conceal me from being known; there my wretched exiſtence ſhall be lingered out."

The eyes of Clifton fully manifeſted the philanthropy of his heart; he liſtened with amazement, with admiration to theſe generous ejaculations of Pontneuf. "And ought ſuch a man

man to be miſerable?" was all he was capable of ſaying.

It was now become very late—the moon was faſt ſinking. Clifton aroſe; "We muſt part for the preſent, Monſieur," ſaid he, "or I ſhall have the character of a ſad rake; to-morrow I will call at your lodgings."

Pontneuf accompanied him to the end of the terrace, and there they parted; not, however, until Clifton had faithfully promiſed that he would not reveal to Veronica the arrival of her lover in England.

The Marquis, it will be conceived, was not much refreſhed with going

to

to bed; his dear Mademoiſelle was too predominant in his mind. That he ſhould have found her, and yet not think it proper to diſcover himſelf to her, was a refinement in miſery which he had never once thought of; he was, however, convinced, by mature deliberation, that, for the happineſs of the woman he adored, it was neceſſary to be ſo. How could he ſee her expoſed to the dreadful ills of poverty! the wife of a miſerable emigrant, without a home, without a friend, and with little dependance but on the bounty of ſtrangers!

Reconciled, by ſuch conſiderations, to the unſpeakable miſery of being for ever ſeparated from his Veronica,

he

he aroſe the next morning, fully prepared to reſiſt whatever the kind Clifton might adviſe of a contrary tendency.

About ten his venerable friend arrived. He had ſpent a night almoſt equally reſtleſs with that of the perſon he was now come to viſit; and it was long before he could reconcile it to himſelf that Veronica ſhould remain ignorant of the arrival of her firſt-love in England;—his promiſe, however, obliged him to ſilence, at leaſt until he had again converſed on the ſubject with Pontneuf.

Clifton was ſcarcely ſeated before he began with adviſing the Marquis, by

by all means, to discover himself to Mademoiselle. This, however, all his persuasions could not prevail upon him to accede to.

"I have," said he, "well considered the business, and am convinced that, by remaining unknown, I shall do a more essential kindness to Veronica, than by any other conduct. Her affliction, on account of my death, is over; affluence and comfort are now within her reach, and why should I snatch her from the enjoyment of them?"

The agony under which he laboured during this speech, plainly

ſhewed with how much pain his reſolution had been formed.

Clifton was ſtruck with admiration at the noble ſentiments of his young friend, and greatly lamented that no better a fate awaited him;—he could not, however, refute his arguments—he felt they were dictated by reaſon, perhaps by juſtice; he therefore promiſed that his ſtory ſhould reſt in concealment, and that he would look out, in ſome remote part of the country, for a ſecluded ſpot to which he might retire without fear of accident or time diſcloſing what he ſo reſolutely perſiſted in keeping a ſecret.

It was agreed, when theſe two

friends parted, that during the reſidence of Pontneuf at Scarborough, he ſhould appear as little as poſſible, and form no acquaintances with his countrymen who were in the ſame place; by which conduct, particularly as he went by a feigned name, there would be little danger of his arrival in England being made public.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

" Where now the joys that once were mine?
Where all my hopes of future bliſs?
Muſt I thoſe joys—thoſe hopes reſign?
Is it—ah! is it come to this?

" Then to ſome drear and ſolemn ſcene,
Some friendly power direct my way,
Where pale Misfortune's haggard train,—
Sad luxury! delight to ſtray.

" Wrapp'd in the ſolitary gloom,
Retir'd from life's fantaſtic crew,
Reſign'd, I'll wait my final doom,
And bid the buſy world adieu."

HAMMOND.

ABOUT ten days after the arrival of the Marquis de Pontneuf at Scar-

borough, the family of Lady Strawbenzie quitted it; the dangers of diſcovery, therefore, no longer attended his continuance there. He had many interviews with Clifton previous to his departure, who promiſed, from time to time, to give him accounts of Veronica; and, alſo, to inquire among ſome friends, which he had in South Wales, for a retirement which might be ſuitable with his inclinations and convenience.

With Veronica, the happineſs of poor Pontneuf appeared entirely to have forſaken him; for the very idea that he was in the ſame place with her, had been, amidſt all his diſtreſſes, ſome conſolation to him. He now ſeemed loſt, indeed, and cut off for ever,

ever, even from the hopes of again beholding the dear object of his affections.

"Ah!" he would often ſigh, "could I but be bleſſed with the ſight of my Veronica, how much would it relieve me! And, ſurely, I might indulge in this melancholy ſatisfaction till ſhe is the wife of Sir Auguſtine; — there can be nothing improper in it."

Such imaginations perpetually haunted him, and had ſo powerful an effect, that he at length determined upon following the ladies to Scotland, which country he reached about eight days ſubſequent to their arrival

in it. The cot of a woodman afforded him ſhelter, and a ſmall ſum of money, to his ruſtic hoſt an immenſe liberality, ſecured him an uninterrupted retreat. Here he again breathed the ſame air with his beloved, and a ſomething like compoſure returned to his boſom. He often ſaw her; he ſoon learned her favourite walks; thoſe he frequented, but in ſuch a diſguiſe as totally precluded every poſſibility of diſcovery. The ruins near the Loch were, on account of her frequent viſits to them, his daily reſort; there, concealed in the building, he often liſtened to her enchanting voice, often heard the chords of her guitar repeat thoſe favourite airs, which, in happier

times,

times, had afforded him ſo much ſatis-faction.

"And can I yield ſuch a woman to another?" he frequently ſighed; "hard, hard deſtiny that requires ſuch a ſacrifice! But it muſt be ſo! I will not compel her to ſhare my poverty."

The reader will, I have no doubt, be now able to account for the appear-ance of the myſterious ſtranger who occaſioned ſo much alarm in the woods of Lomond;—it was, in truth, no other than the Marquis! The even-ing on which he appeared near the houſe, he had been informed was the laſt of Lady Strawbenzie's viſit; and, as he had not for ſeveral days

ſeen the young ladies at the Loch, he determined to enter the Counteſs's pleaſure grounds, and take a near view of the manſion which contained his charmer. This he indulged himſelf in, as the only adieu which circumſtances allowed him to take. He perceived ſome one at the window; it might be his Veronica; he hurried away from a fear of alarming her.

He was ſoon acquainted with the ſearch which was made after him; but a further liberality from his little ſtore ſecured him from diſcovery.

He continued but a very ſhort time in Scotland, after the departure of Lady Strawbenzie; but returned to Scarborough,

Scarborough, where he found a moſt affectionate letter from Clifton. He had not acquainted this valuable friend with his northern excurſion; for he was convinced that he muſt have diſapproved of it, and to act in oppoſition to his opinion, he could not have reconciled to himſelf. Now, however, that it was over, he communicated every particular reſpecting it.

Clifton, whatever might be his ſentiments, did not expreſs, in his anſwer to the letter which contained this information, any thing like diſapprobation; but merely ſaid, he was afraid that, inſtead of reconciling him to a final ſeparation from Veronica, his

following her, although at a diſtance, would but ſerve to keep alive a flame, towards the quenching of which every effort ſhould be uſed.

Pontneuf continued at Scarborough until March, when he received information from Mr. Cliſton, that a ſnug retreat, in the moſt romantic part of South Wales, was found out for him. With this intelligence there was alſo conveyed to him a very preſſing invitation to Strawbenzie Caſtle, the chaplain now being the only inhabitant of it. This was, without heſitation, accepted of, and he bade a final adieu to Scarborough.

The

The ſituation of the manſion of Lady Strawbenzie, with the beautiful pleaſure grounds, and romantic country, objects univerſally admired, ſeemed to claim almoſt the adoration of the Marquis. His Veronica had paſſed much of her time there, and, from Clifton's account, with particular ſatisfaction. The ſcenes ſhe had admired were enquired for by him;—in thoſe he walked perpetually; and ſometimes indulged his melancholy reflections to ſuch a height, that Clifton almoſt wiſhed him removed from a ſpot with which the idea of his Veronica appeared ſo cloſely connected.

The ſtrange account of that young lady's proving to be the daughter of Mr. Clavering, and her relationſhip to the Lomonds, which were communicated by Lady Strawbenzie to her chaplain, were imparted to the Marquis, and affected him greatly; but appeared to ſtrengthen his reſolution of remaining unknown, as he eaſily imagined how averſe her newly diſcovered family would of courſe be to her marriage with an unhappy emigrant, particularly when ſuch an event could not poſſibly happen without breaking off her connection with a man ſo eminently good and reſpectable as Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie.

By

By the beginning of April all matters were adjuſted for the removal of Pontneuf into Wales. Letters had, previous to this, arrived from his Neapolitan Banker, informing him that his little property might be received in London. This ſtrengthened his reſolution of travelling ſouth before he retired into Wales; he knew Veronica was at Richmond, and he fancied, by having one more view of her, he ſhould become eaſier. He took leave of Mr. Clifton without making him acquainted with his deſign, for he feared his interference might prevent this laſt indulgence.

He ſoon arrived in town, and having ſettled with the Bankers,

took an obſcure lodging in the vicinity of Richmond, determining to remain there until the marriage of his Veronica rendered it, according to his ideas, improper for him to behold her. He now was in daily habits of ſeeing her; and often followed her, at a diſtance, in her walks, but always diſguiſed.

The reader already knows the alarm which his ſudden appearance in the gardens had occaſioned; from that time he reſolved never to walk there, but at thoſe hours when there was no likelihood of meeting with her, but content himſelf with viewing her as ſhe walked upon the terrace, towards which his lodgings looked: he

he was ſenſible of the perturbation he had thrown her into, and this reſolution was the conſequence.

As he aroſe very early, however, he ventured to indulge himſelf with viſiting her favourite haunt at thoſe hours when moſt perſons are enjoying their repoſe. He frequently ſat in the alcove where he had been bleſſed with a ſight of her, and on the morning of his unexpected introduction into the lodgings of Lady Riverſdale, was making ſome memorandums there, when footſteps interrupted him; and perceiving, through the ſhrubbery, two ladies, one of whom he knew to be his Veronica, he ſtarted from his ſeat, and retreated through the wood; but

but ſo much agitated was he, that in attempting to put the pocket-book up, it fell from his hand: to return to pick it up, was unavoidably to diſcover himſelf, and the book might probably eſcape obſervation. He heard the ſoft tones of his Veronica; he was almoſt tempted to return, but the idea of the poverty which he had alone the power of offering to her, made him ſtill perſevere in his attempts to conceal himſelf. He waited in a remote part of the garden until the ladies retired; and, from a mount which commanded a view of the fields, beheld at a diſtance their white drapery in the avenue which led to their lodgings. He then ventured back to the alcove; his book was gone; his heart

heart beat high; a billet preſented itſelf, directed for "Monſieur le Marquiſ de Pontneuf." The writing was Veronica's; the ſummons was too welcome not to be attended; he felt, however, how ill prepared he ſhould be, in his preſent ſtate of agitation, to bear an interview, and how much his beloved Veronica muſt of courſe be affected:—he therefore retired to his lodgings; nor was it until ſeveral hours had elapſed, that he could muſter up reſolution to viſit thoſe of Lady Riverſdale.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

"Now all the other paſſions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts; and raſh embrac'd deſpair;
And ſhuddering fear, and green-ey'd jealouſy.
O Love! be moderate, allay thy ecſtacy,
In meaſure rein thy joy; ſcant this exceſs;
I feel too much thy bleſſing, make it leſs
For fear I ſurfeit."

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the Marquis de Pontneuf had concluded the relation of his adventures, it was agreed upon by Lady Riverſdale and Veronica, that their father ſhould immediately be ſent for,

for, as the perſon who was moſt proper to be conſulted in the buſineſs, and moſt likely to adviſe how it ſhould be diſcovered to Sir Auguſtine.

Mr. Clavering arrived in a few hours; and nothing poſſibly could equal the ſurpriſe with which he received the information that the Marquis was yet living. His opinion was, that no time ought to be loſt in making Strawbenzie acquainted with this unexpected circumſtance. The method, however, he could not then decide; nor did he think it proper to do ſo, until the Lomonds had been conſulted, which he promiſed to do that evening, and return to

Richmond

Richmond the following morning, with the reſult of his conference with them.

Pontneuf was not preſent at this interview between the ladies and their father; he had departed to his lodgings before that gentleman entered the houſe. Mr. Clavering, however, agreed, previous to his departure, that the Marquis ſhould be introduced to him the next day; for he was ſo partial to his daughter, that he had imbibed a good opinion of him, merely from her affections being placed upon him, and poſſeſſed too much humanity to think for a moment that after he was diſcovered to be living, her contract with Sir Auguſtine

Auguſtine Strawbenzie could be at all binding. Poor as Pontneuf might be, yet this benevolent father well knew, from his own feelings, that he was the only man with whom his child could expect happineſs.

As ſoon as the Counteſs of Lomond was made acquainted with the Marquis's arrival, ſhe accompanied Mr. Clavering to the houſe of Lady Strawbenzie; for it was agreed by them both, that it was highly neceſſary ſhe ſhould be conſulted.

That the happineſs of her favourite nephew, and her hopes of affinity to the dear Veronica, ſhould at once be deſtroyed, gave her at firſt much uneaſineſs;

uneaſineſs; but a few minutes' deliberation in ſome meaſure reconciled her to it, and ſhe could not avoid coinciding with Lady Lomond and Mr. Clavering, that it would be the height of cruelty to think of ſeparating Pontneuf and Veronica; and that it was proper Sir Auguſtine ſhould be informed of the exiſtence of the former as ſoon as poſſible.

"He is a man too generous," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "to think himſelf ill uſed; he knew of Veronica's early attachment to the Marquis, and admired her for her perſeverance in it. I know he will ſubmit with fortitude, with reſignation to this ſad reverſe of fortune; it will hurt him much at

at firſt, but the rectitude of his principles will enable him to get over it better than we expect."

It was agreed by all parties, that no perſon was ſo proper to break the buſineſs to Strawbenzie as Miſs Sherard herſelf; a letter from her would wear the appearance of the reſpect and attention which were ſo properly due to him.

Early the next morning, Mr. Clavering proceeded into Surry, with an account of his interview with the two old ladies. The painful taſk of writing to Strawbenzie, which their reſolutions had given to her, diſtreſſed and agitated poor Veronica greatly;

however, as ſhe was convinced of its propriety, ſhe, without much heſitation, retired to her writing-deſk, and, whilſt Lady Riverſdale undertook to introduce Pontneuf to her father, compoſed the following letter:—

"*To Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie, Baronet.*

"SIR AUGUSTINE,

"After what has paſſed between us, you will readily ſuppoſe how great is my agitation when I ſit down to write a letter like the preſent. I have promiſed to unite my fate with your's! Judge of my confuſion when I tell you that this promiſe cannot be performed! I will no longer keep you

you in ſuſpenſe.—The Marquis de Pontneuf lives; he is in England. To ſay I was ſorry for having diſcovered him, would be a deceit, for which I am certain you would deſpiſe me. To marry me now, I know your generoſity too well to ſuppoſe you could think of.

"That you will pity and forgive me for unintentionally injuring your peace, is all I can aſk.

"Want of connection, and incoherency of ſtyle, will, I am ſure, fully diſplay the ſituation of mind of the perturbed writer, who ſubſcribes herſelf,

"Your much honoured ſervant,

"VERONICA SHERARD."

This letter being approved of by her father, ſhe immediately ſealed it, and delivered it into his hands, in order to be ſent expreſs to Sir Auguſtine.

The interview of Mr. Clavering with the Marquis prepoſſeſſed him greatly in his favour; ſo much ſo, that on his return to Lady Lomond's houſe in town, he was high in his encomiums upon him.

Strawbenzie, it will eaſily be imagined, was but ill prepared for the dreadful letter which he received from Veronica. The peruſal of it plunged him into ſuch a ſtate of agony, that many

many hours elapſed before he could ſuppoſe the letter any thing more than an illuſion;—he read it ſeveral times; the writing was Miſs Sherard's; it was too plain that his miſery was real:—at length compaſſion for the ſituation of a perſon ſo beloved as Veronica, baniſhed every other conſideration, and his generous heart vented itſelf in the following lines:—

"*To Miſs Sherard, Richmond.*

"DEAREST VERONICA,

"That I muſt be compelled to reſign the place in your heart, which it has been my greateſt pride to

hold, you will readily imagine diſtreſſes me more than I have language to expreſs; yet, when I relinquiſh it to a man whoſe prior claim I have long been acquainted with, I ſhould think myſelf unmanly, unfeeling, and unjuſt in murmuring at it.

"That the Marquis de Pontneuf has ſurvived his misfortunes, every feeling heart will ardently rejoice at; and that your days may be long and happy with him, is my fervent prayer!

"Adieu, deareſt Veronica! for I muſt once more indulge myſelf in addreſſing you by this epithet; ſometimes think with pity on the ſufferings of a man

a man who cannot but adore you until death;

"And remain devotedly,

"And altogether your's,

"A. STRAWBENZIE."

Miſs Sherard had no ſooner received this letter, than ſhe communicated the contents of it to her friend, who united in commending the diſtreſſed Baronet, and admiring his generous magnanimity in bearing ſuch an unforeſeen change in his fortune with ſo much fortitude.

The Marquis in a few days was introduced to the family of his Veronica, and received in the moſt flat-

tering manner. His immediate union with that young lady appeared the general deſire, and in leſs than a week the ceremony was performed which made them happy for ever.

From the relationſhip which Miſs Sherard bore to the Lomonds, (and which was now clearly ſubſtantiated by letters received by Sir Auguſtine from Madame Chapelle, the perſon to whom the dying Abbeſs had referred them) the fortune that Lord Saint Paul had left to his ſiſter, Lady Suſan, now centered in her; which, having accumulated for many years, was by this time a handſome ſum, and, together with the wreck of the Marquis's fortune, ſufficient

to

to afford our young and unambitious couple every comfort they had the vanity to hope for.

Sir Auguſtine Strawbenzie was long before he overcame the ſevere trial which had befallen him; for notwithſtanding the apparent heroiſm with which he bore it, yet it was a conqueſt which coſt him dear; his uprightneſs of heart, however, aided by the attentions of his affectionate and reſpectable aunt, in time enabled him to be reconciled to his fate, and even to viſit in the family of his Veronica, and witneſs, without envy, her unſpeakable happineſs.

A ſhort

A ſhort time after the marriage of Veronica, intelligence arrived from Ireland that Lord Riverſdale was no more:—the well-known hoſpitality of that country, in which he had indulged to great exceſs, had inflamed his blood to ſuch a degree, that a fever was the conſequence, which in a very few days proved fatal. On his death-bed he acknowledged to an old ſervant who attended him, that he had inſerted in the papers the paragraph which mentioned the Marquis de Pontneuf's death, merely from an idea of forwarding his ſuit with Veronica.

By the death of this Nobleman, Lady Riverſdale was again at liberty; and

and her health, which for ſome time had been in a convaleſcent ſtate, was ſoon perfectly re-eſtabliſhed.

Thus Veronica had the ſupreme ſatisfaction of witneſſing the felicity of all her friends, and being herſelf exalted to a ſtate of happineſs, which, in her moſt ſanguine moments, ſhe had never once dared to expect.

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